

Y E A R N I N G

TO BE

FREE



**SOVIET JEWISH
IMMIGRANTS
IN AMERICA**

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Eritrean war hurts relief effort

By Chris Cartter

OROTA, ERITREA

Last week Ethiopian government forces took control of one town and a large farming project from the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) in Western Eritrea, as Soviet-supplied aircraft bombed relief convoys ferrying emergency supplies to civilians in the famine-stricken Red Sea territory.

On August 31 the EPLF withdrew from Tessenei and Ali Ghidir after holding the former market town since January 1984 during a series of large-scale battles in the area, according to a spokesperson for the nationalist opposition movement here. This is the second town the EPLF has evacuated in as many weeks in the face of a massive build-up of Ethiopian military forces that includes infantry and mechanized reinforcements from southern and central Ethiopia, as well as 17,000 new recruits rushed here by ship, EPLF leaders say.

While Tessenei has little significance in the overall confrontation between the two armies, the change will have an immediate impact on efforts to aid drought and famine victims in the region. The largest agricultural rehabilitation site for displaced people run by the Eritrean Relief Association (ERA), which operates in EPLF-held areas of Eritrea, was also taken by the government just as the fall harvest was being prepared.

Meanwhile, two ERA trucks were destroyed in an early morning air raid two weeks earlier by four Ethiopian MiG jets, according to an eyewitness to the incident. The trucks were carrying food and other supplies to one of 42 ERA camps for an estimated 190,000 people forced to flee their homes due to war and drought during the past year.

For 24 years the Eritreans have been fighting for independence from Ethiopia, which annexed the former Italian colony in 1962. The EPLF now controls more than 85 percent of the Pennsylvania-sized territory, while the government controls the larger towns and the main roads. The ERA is the only private aid agency with access to more than two million drought-affected civilians who live in the EPLF-controlled countryside. Recent Ethiopian advances against the EPLF seem designed to cut the front's supply lines to the highland areas where heavy fighting has been going on for months.

But this is also the route by which ERA reaches the civilian population with truck convoys and camel caravans. The Ali Ghidir farm near Tessenei was the largest of 18 agricultural projects aimed at giving famine victims a chance to become self-sufficient in food production. A visit to the farm one week before the government takeover found the project running smoothly.

There has been no word yet of the fate of the project or the civilians who ran it, but United Nations officials in Sudan report that hundreds of Eritrean refugees are now arriving each day in already overcrowded camps there. EPLF leaders claim that there are now 110,000 Ethiopian troops in Eritrea. Western diplomats in the Ethiopian capital contend that the number may grow to as many as 250,000. But most observers put the total strength of the Ethiopian army at 300,000. More than one-half are now tied down by security duties in large cities and by insurgencies elsewhere in Ethiopia.

War intensifies

A three-week tour of EPLF-held areas of Eritrea found the war there steadily intensifying at a time when millions of impoverished peasant farmers and nomads are still reeling from the five-year-old drought. At least 11 villages, including crops and livestock, have been destroyed and thousands forced off the land by advancing Ethiopian troops.

The ERA currently maintains a fleet of 124 trucks, provided by European, North American and Australian donor agencies, which move food and convoys from Sudan at night over tortuous roads to displaced peoples' camps in EPLF territory. Each camp is carefully selected to hide civilians from air attack under the sparse cover of thorny acacia trees that line the dry river bed. Water availability, access to rugged dirt tracks used by ERA trucks and proximity to

Millions of Eritreans are still suffering from the effects of the five-year-old drought.

original homes are also primary considerations that determine camp locations.

Visits to several camouflaged camps—containing 4,000-6,000 people each—reveal that ERA provided basic food rations, supplementary food and other supplies, such as blankets and second-hand clothes. The camp populations administer themselves through elected committees. Schools were started and sophisticated health services provided through the national programs of the Eritrean Public Health Program.

"Our aim is to feed and care for our people at home and help them build their own capacity to grow food. No one wants to become a refugee," said Tekie Bevene, head of ERA's Research & Development Department.

Conditions for the 190,950 of those in the camps described as "most affected" are gradually stabilizing through ERA's intensive feeding program, according to healthworkers there. The remaining 560,000 famine victims—described as "severely affected"—have mostly stayed in their highland villages, determined to eke out a survival existence despite years of drought, war and loss of livestock. There they receive aid from ERA occasionally via pack animal caravans.

But donations by international aid agencies to ERA have lagged far behind requested amounts. With only 20 percent of need being met, ERA is forced to concentrate its limited resources on those more easily reached in the camps. In addition to shortages, renewed warfare in the highlands has complicated the task of reaching the most vulnerable there.

"This is how we must work because of the war: slaves of the night," Mebratu Iyasu said during a midnight visit to Ali Ghidir project before government troops arrived. Pointing to the canal-digging machine busy in the darkness, Iyasu added, "Before this machine was bought by ERA in March, 800 to 900 farmers worked 70 nights digging the canal with only their sweat." The canal, which carries the water from

THE STORY INSIDE

the Gash River to agricultural land at Ali Ghidir, is 12 miles long.

Ali Ghidir was the largest of 13 water diversion projects under way that would have put a total of 6,000 hectares under cultivation this season. The remaining projects total 1,000 hectares and are situated near other ERA settlement camps.

Started by an Italian soldier in 1948, Ali Ghidir was bought by a close associate of Emperor Selassie in 1962 to grow cotton. The land was nationalized in 1976 by the current regime. Except for 200 hectares, the fertile land lay dormant under the current Ethiopian regime for the next eight years. Work began on the project after the EPLF drove Ethiopian troops out of two garrisons, one at Tessenei and another at Ali Ghidir. Today, more than 5,000 hectares are under cultivation. The crop is sorghum, Eritrea's staple food. Eighteen hundred families living in 13 villages surrounding the project divide the land according to village and family size.

Many of the families were settled farmers in the highlands. Others, like Muhammad Kur Idris, were pastoralists. Idris, 42, said, "I used to graze animals—20 goats, 30 sheep, one camel. Then the drought killed everything, and I took my family to camp in Sudan. When we heard about this, we came back to Eritrea. Now I can grow three types of sorghum with seeds supplied by ERA."

The ERA and civilian departments of the EPLF coordinated the clearing and maintenance of the project, supplied most inputs, taught basic farm techniques, and owned and operated six tractors used to assist farmers in plowing. ■

Chris Cartter is the Africa Program officer for Grassroots International, one of seven cooperating agencies in the INTERFAM network.



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IN THESE TIMES

By Salim Muwakkil

ALTHOUGH THERE IS A GENERAL consensus that the Senate will pass legislation imposing mild sanctions on the South African government of P.W. Botha, speculation grows about how President Reagan will respond to the measure. On record already as opposed to sanctions, Reagan has also vowed to veto the legislation. But congressional leaders, including some of his major allies, predict that garnering enough votes for an override will be so easy that it will be interpreted as a major rebuke of the administration's position.

The South African sanctions issue has assumed a political importance quite out of proportion to the largely symbolic effect it would have on the Botha regime. There are two major reasons for this:

- Political observers, searching for any sign of lame duckery in the Reagan administration, are closely scrutinizing the sanctions fight. Meanwhile, the White House—reportedly gearing up to present some ideological initiatives aggressively during this second term—is anxious to appear robust. If the Republican-dominated Senate passes the sanctions bill and then overrides a presidential veto, it will be an act of defiance administration officials fear may spread.

- The South African issue has provoked a bitter disagreement within the ranks of conservative Republicans, and the rift has implications that reach all the way to the 1988 presidential race. Several younger conservatives have found common cause in a group they call the Conservative Opportunity Society (COS), opposing the administration's "constructive engagement" South Africa policy. Some are actually helping to lead the fight for sanctions against Pretoria. House Republican Jack Kemp of New York, who's been a torch-bearer for many of Reagan's programs and considered a leading conservative candidate for president is also a leading member of the COS.

An intramural struggle

Most of the political right wing (including the so-called New Right), however, are diametrically opposed to the COS position. They are urging Reagan to veto any sanctions legislation and develop even closer ties with the Botha government.

The issue has escalated into an often vitriolic intramural struggle over the direction of the conservative movement and, some say, for the heart of the Republican Party. After months of tortured ruminations among Democrats about the condition of their party's heart, it's comforting to know the coronary problems are bipartisan.

The COS revealed its break with the administration's South Africa policy last December when 35 conservative House members signed an anti-apartheid letter that was delivered to the South African ambassador. They later voted with the majority when the House passed a sanctions bill 380 to 48. These young conservatives argue that the Republican Party must remove the taint of racism from its ranks if it is to become the majority party.

"This is not a break with the administration," insists Dave Hoppe, a Kemp aide. "It's just a minor disagreement. Although Rep. Kemp generally supports the president as the architect of the country's foreign policy, he feels Republicans should do more to demonstrate our abhorrence of racism in any form. And apartheid is a particularly pernicious form of racism."

Hoppe says Kemp is trying to demonstrate to blacks that their concerns also interest him. "Rep. Kemp also thinks it's necessary to send a message to Pretoria that the U.S. Congress is watching what is going on very closely." In addition to Kemp, the COS' stars are Vin Weber of Minnesota, Newt Gingrich of Georgia and Robert Walker of Pennsylvania.

Reagan's "constructive engagement"



South Africa is now threatening to divide the Republican Party

policy is also losing favor among Republicans who would probably be classified as traditional. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chair Richard Lugar (R-IN), a longtime Reagan loyalist, told *U.S. News & World Report* that congressional action to impose sanctions will pass because it takes an official stance that will clear up "any ambiguities in our position toward apartheid and the South African government's lack of movement to end it."

Some congressional workers who have long struggled against the U.S. embrace of apartheid contend the conservatives now speaking out against apartheid are engaged more in political maneuvering than in the search for political morality.

"Many of these conservative opponents of apartheid are concerned about their political survival, plain and simple," said one congressional source. "They're good political opportunists, trying to carve out a role for themselves as a major Republican caucus. They say they're advocates of sanctions, but what kind of sanctions are they

While denying a break with the administration, many Republican leaders are looking for ways to dissociate themselves from the Reagan hardliners.

talking about? The banning of Kruggerand sales is the only substantial sanction left in the Senate bill. These guys are looking for a middle ground that isn't there."

The Senate bill, scheduled for a September 9 vote, is a compromise between the earlier Senate version and a much stronger bill passed by the House. It includes a ban on the sale of Kruggerands, South Africa's gold coin, a ban on new loans to the South African government, except for educational, housing and health facilities, and restrictions on the export to South Africa of computer and nuclear equipment.

Campaigns of the New Right

Leading New Right theorists are imploring Reagan to disregard the possibility of an override and to veto the bill. Since the vote on sanctions is primarily a symbolic one, they reason, the president has nothing to lose by wielding his veto pen. What he gains, presumably, is Pretoria's gratitude.

New Right luminaries are busy mobilizing the troops for major propaganda assaults on the pro-sanction forces. Howard Phillips, president of the Conservative Caucus has mailed to potential donors on his enormous mailing list literature explaining the South African story from his Manichean perspective: the Free World vs. the Commies.

Moral Majority leader Rev. Jerry Falwell, just back from a helicopter tour of South Africa, announced he will stump for Botha in between his book-burning rallies against pornography. Senators Jesse Helms (R-NC) and Steve Symms (R-ID), two supporters of South Africa who feel no need to make the obligatory denunciation of apartheid, plan to continue their fight through the filibuster route. Richard Viguerie, direct mail entrepreneur and New Right combatant, has indicated that he will do all he can to help stem the pro-sanctions tide.

According to a report in the *Washington Post*, White House communications director Patrick Buchanan recently called New Right leaders together for a strategy meeting in his office. The agenda was concerned with ways to mobilize conservative support against sanctions.

So far, the major targets of their ire have been their pro-sanctions brethren. Phillips says the COS members suffer from "acute moral cowardice" and are "intellectually dishonest." Buchanan has used the word "turncoat" to describe the COS group. He also accused them of "stabbing South Africa in the back."

Constructive engagement's architect

The architect of the "constructive engagement" policy is Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester A. Crocker. A former fellow at the Georgetown Center for Strategic Studies, Crocker came to the Reagan team's attention through articles he's written on South Africa for *Foreign Affairs*. These articles provided the Reaganites with the intellectual justifications they needed to rationalize their tolerance for apartheid, so they hired Crocker to formulate the administration's official policy.

And, though the Heritage Foundation has generously supplied the intellectual resources to aid what one quipster terms the "don't rock the Botha" campaign, Crocker has remained the Reagan regime's primary South Africa point man. Lately he's even had to spend time bailing out his boss from his most recent "misstatements."

When Reagan, in a radio interview, praised Pretoria as a "reformist" government that had eliminated many apartheid practices, Crocker was called upon to clarify things. The reforms the president applauded were denounced by Crocker as "inadequate." They "haven't addressed the core political issues that must be addressed in South Africa," he said.

The view from Trans Africa

Nii Akuetteh, a researcher with Trans Africa, the lobby group credited with sparking the domestic furor over this country's benighted South Africa policies, said the hypocrisy of the Reagan administration is "so blatant it should be embarrassing. How can Reagan and his supporters argue that economic sanctions hurt South Africa's oppressed while arguing the exact opposite in the case of our policy toward Cuba, Poland and Nicaragua, not to mention the Soviet Union."

"It's inconceivable to me how anyone who considers himself at all ethical can support this high hypocrisy," he said. Although Akuetteh expressed optimism that the U.S. would eventually recognize apartheid's evil, he's worried about electronic preachers entering the fray. "These preachers have a huge captive audience and they can pass on inaccurate information about South Africa without anyone calling them to account. That's a lot of unchecked power," he said. "That's too much power." ■

INSHORT

Beth Maschinot

Where coal is king

Williamson, W. Va., advertises itself as the "heart of the billion-dollar coal field" and is now the center of a bloody battle between the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) and the A.T. Massey Company. At stake in the vast, two-state area of the Massey coalfields is whether the UMWA will represent workers in independent mines like Massey's—mines that are not covered by the union's national agreement with the Bituminous Coal Operators Association. The strike, nearing the end of its first year, has brought the sound of gunfire back to the West Virginia hills, the scene of coal miner violence in 1920.

The Massey Company was bought in 1980 by the giant Fluor Corporation in partnership with Royal Dutch Shell, and has grown to become the sixth largest coal producer in the country. The UMWA Local 4942 is now the target of multinationals who would like to break the union's already diminishing hold on the coalfields. So when the company refused to renew its contract with the UMWA last fall, the union buckled down for a long and furious fight.

Now that 11 months of the strike have passed, 1,800 miners are still out. The terms of the strike have often been brutal: strikebreakers have been pumped into the area, and one was killed by gunfire in late May. A union picketer was shot in the hand. An explosion last month rocked the district headquarters of the UMWA in Pikeville, Ky. A Massey security man has been arrested for allegedly trying to contract the killing of a union leader, and union members and strikebreakers have had their cars and homes shot at.

According to UMWA officials, the Massey administration has been hard at work providing a fortress of protection for the strikebreakers. Extra out-of-state guards have been employed, and they've been observed practicing military maneuvers and holding shooting practice on the ridge behind the main plant. To further fend off union members, the fence of the parking lot has been reinforced with mine timbers and the window of the mine office has been shielded with bulletproof glass.

And behind the fortress, the mines are still producing—at 60 percent of pre-strike production, by one estimate.

Negotiations have completely broken down during the summer months, and for the time being there are no predictions of when the strike will end. The UMWA is considering boycotts and corporate campaigns against Fluor and Royal Dutch Shell. Local 4942 President Frank Browning sees a mixed bag for the union: "In the long run we'll probably get a contract. But in the short run, it doesn't look good."

"I thought this was a free country," said UMWA supporter Virginia Cantrell as she stared at a surveillance camera Massey had set up on the plant's roof. "I must have missed something along the way."

New Zealand's pickle

There's been more than bombs and international intrigue on the mind of New Zealand Prime Minister David Lange these days. A stepped-up attack from New Zealand's right-wing fundamentalists (reportedly with help from the U.S. right) threatens to defeat an important Labour government bill on homosexual rights. The right ultimately hopes to build enough momentum to pressure New Zealand's anti-nuclear stand.

The religious right's first target earlier this year was the ratification of the UN Convention against the discrimination of women. Busloads of right-wing women attended the women's forums that debated the convention. Though they ultimately failed to block the ratification, their network-building was strengthened for the current anti-gay campaign.

In March, the Homosexual Law Reform Bill, decriminalizing homosexuality and banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, was introduced into the New Zealand parliament. Most observers thought the bill would sail through the parliament, since it had the support of Lange, the majority of Labour Party members and most of the public polled. The bill passed on its first reading by a large majority, but now it must return to the House for a second and third vote.

Soon after the bill's first passage, though, four conservative members of parliament, the Salvation



UMWA strikers on guard outside the Massey coalfields in West Virginia.

Executions in the U.S. rose sharply last year: Twenty-one people were executed in 1984, compared to 11 total executions from 1975 to 1983. A record 1,405 inmates were on death row at the year's end.

Amnesty International (AI) appealed to Texas Gov. Mark White for clemency for Charles Rumbaugh who was convicted for committing a murder during a robbery when he was 17. AI said that an execution for crimes committed before the age of 18 was a "clear violation of minimum international standards spelled out in treaties and United Nations guidelines." The human rights group pointed out that there are at least 33 prisoners in Texas prisons charged with offenses committed when they were minors. Of these, nine of them are in Texas prisons.

Cardinal Jerome Hamer has increasingly played the heavy during the intermittent confrontations between Rome and several left U.S. nuns this past year. As the prefect for the Congregation for Religious and

Secular Institutes (CRIS), Hamer is the man responsible for overseeing women's religious orders in the U.S. and also was in charge of censuring the nuns who signed the "abortion ad" in the *New York Times* (see *In These Times*, Jan. 9). According to last week's *National Catholic Reporter*, Hamer added fuel to the fire while talking to women religious in Chicago. Sister Deborah Barrett reported that she tried to tell Hamer of the concerns of U.S. women in the church, and he responded by asking her if she "really wanted to be a nun." Sister Connie Driscoll added that Hamer talked to her about "good nuns and bad nuns" in a way that implied that she was in the latter category. NCR also reported that, though a few ad signers have been cleared with CRIS without having publicly to recant their stand, as was first demanded, most of the 24 women are still in limbo with the authorities.

A study issued by the Open Housing Center in New York reports that the real estate industry in the met-

ropolitan New York area has spent almost \$2 million on housing discrimination costs in the past four years. One hundred fifty-seven housing discrimination suits from fair housing groups, civil rights groups and government agencies won compensation in the courts, with race being the basis of most of the complaints.

Believe it or not: high-powered fundraising from the right sometimes falls flat. A case in point was the April fundraising dinner for "Nicaraguan refugees living in Costa Rica and Honduras" that touted big stars, including Bob Hope, Wayne Newton and President Reagan. Of the \$219,525 taken in at the bash, only \$3,000 is going to the "refugees." According to the Nicaraguan Refugee Fund, costs for the dinner totaled \$216,000, including \$117,000 in consulting fees and \$71,000 to feed the 700 guests (who paid \$500 each for their dinner). A lawyer for the fund said they didn't make quite as much as they had expected because a lot of people failed to make good on their pledges.

Army and other right-wing groups geared up to upset the bill's support, according to Alison Laurie of the Gay Task Force of New Zealand. The groups have organized a massive anti-gay campaign, replete with rallies and a petition that's garnered 750,000 signatures (in a country of three million) to stop the bill.

According to Steve Ault of the U.S. Mobilization for Survival, though the right is genuinely anti-gay, it is also "using the gay issue in the hopes that defeat of the bill will destabilize the Labour government and ultimately reverse its anti-nuclear policy." Ault also warns that a few people from the U.S. right have done some consulting work for the anti-gay campaign. He cites as one example a New Yorker who helped defeat gay rights legislation in Houston last year.

Though gay and lesbian leaders in New Zealand hedge on whether the defeat of this one bill could turn the tide against Lange, they say the next few months may well be the biggest test yet of the Labour government's ability to stand strong in the face of tremendous pressure from the right.

Bombing the foxhole

In their recent assault on "international terrorism," the team of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher may succeed in short-circuiting the U.S. tradition of political asylum. A recently proposed U.S./U.K. Supplemental Extradition Treaty is an attempt by the two leaders to remove a safeguard that enables fugitives sought by foreign governments to argue political motivation for their alleged offenses in the U.S. courts. Previous attempts by the Reagan administration to allow the State Department rather than the courts decide who are "freedom fighters" and who are "terrorists" have failed. And a similar treaty with the Marcos government made little headway on Capitol Hill during the administration's first term.

But the present climate—including the public's anti-terrorist sentiment and the generally high regard for anything British—has tilted support for the treaty with Britain. As State Department legal counsel Judge Abraham Sofaer told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in support of the bill, "Why should terrorists fleeing democratic countries with legal systems like our own be able to request political asylum?" The *New York Times* used the same logic to endorse the treaty as a way of "closing a terrorist foxhole."

But the recent dismissal of an alleged U.K. terrorist who was extradited to a U.S. federal court in Philadelphia should give the senators pause when they decide on the treaty's passage on September 18. The sole evidence against the Northern Irish alleged terrorist Jim Barr was a statement by an informer, Harry Kirkpatrick. Kirkpatrick had told Barr to go to a certain location to check if police were nearby. The location was later the scene of a murder attempt, and on this evidence alone the British government charged Barr with attempted murder. Had Barr been returned to Northern Ireland, as the Reagan/Thatcher proposal would mandate, he may well have been tried in a juryless court, in a mass trial with as many as 38 other defendants, with Kirkpatrick's evidence as the sole basis of the trial.

The treaty also opens a diplomatic Pandora's Box. Besides establishing implicit support for the British Northern Ireland government, it raises the problem of just which U.S. allies the State Department can afford to insult by avoiding similar treaties. "How can the State Department turn down a request for this treaty by Marcos now?" asks the American Civil Liberties Union lawyer Susan Benda. Stay tuned: other "democratic" countries like the Philippines may soon be clamoring for Reagan's "terrorist solution."

This week's contributors: Steve Turner and Donna DeCesare

By Joan Walsh

LOS ANGELES

FROM THE FRAMED POSTERS OF *The Big Chill* and *Gandhi* on the walls to the impressive display of computer equipment everywhere, just a quick walk through the Beverly Boulevard suite where next year's Great Peace March is taking shape makes clear that this is not a "peace movement" office.

The comparison isn't meant to be unfavorable; the set-up is certainly a journalist's dream. Press clippings are collected and easily available. Phone calls are returned promptly. Interviews are readily arranged. When March founder and executive director David Mixner was running a little late for our appointment, his assistant Keith Cruickshank used the time for an introductory tour.

Walking 5,000 people 3,235 miles, from Los Angeles to Washington, D.C., is an endeavor with only military analogies, Cruickshank acknowledged. From March to November 1986, that's 2,500 tents, 1,275,000 showers, 3,825,000 meals and 10,098,000 footsteps per marcher. Right now 62 people are working full-time on the project, and the number will grow to 100. In one room of the peace march suite, 10 people are crowded around the table discussing logistics; in another the field staff is working on outreach to the communities along the march route; and everywhere, it seems, people are talking about raising money for the estimated \$15 million project.

Everyone seems bright, personable and busy. Many are veteran activists, some are political newcomers. Cruickshank was a Pepperdine University swim coach before Mixner tapped him to assist in the early march planning, and he readily admits he's never been active on peace issues before. Later, when Daniel and Patricia Ellsberg arrive, Mixner proudly announces that Cruickshank is a Registered Republican. Even in a decidedly non-partisan project like the march, that's an idiosyncrasy. The Ellsbergs reminisce about the October 1969 Vietnam Moratorium, which Mixner helped found, as they wait for their tour to begin.

This is People Reaching Out for Peace, or PRO-Peace, the organization that is trying to galvanize a movement to abolish nuclear weapons. Launched while the peace movement languished in the days after the November 1984 election, PRO-Peace is infectiously audacious, demanding that the U.S. and Soviet Union not freeze, but dismantle their nuclear arsenals.

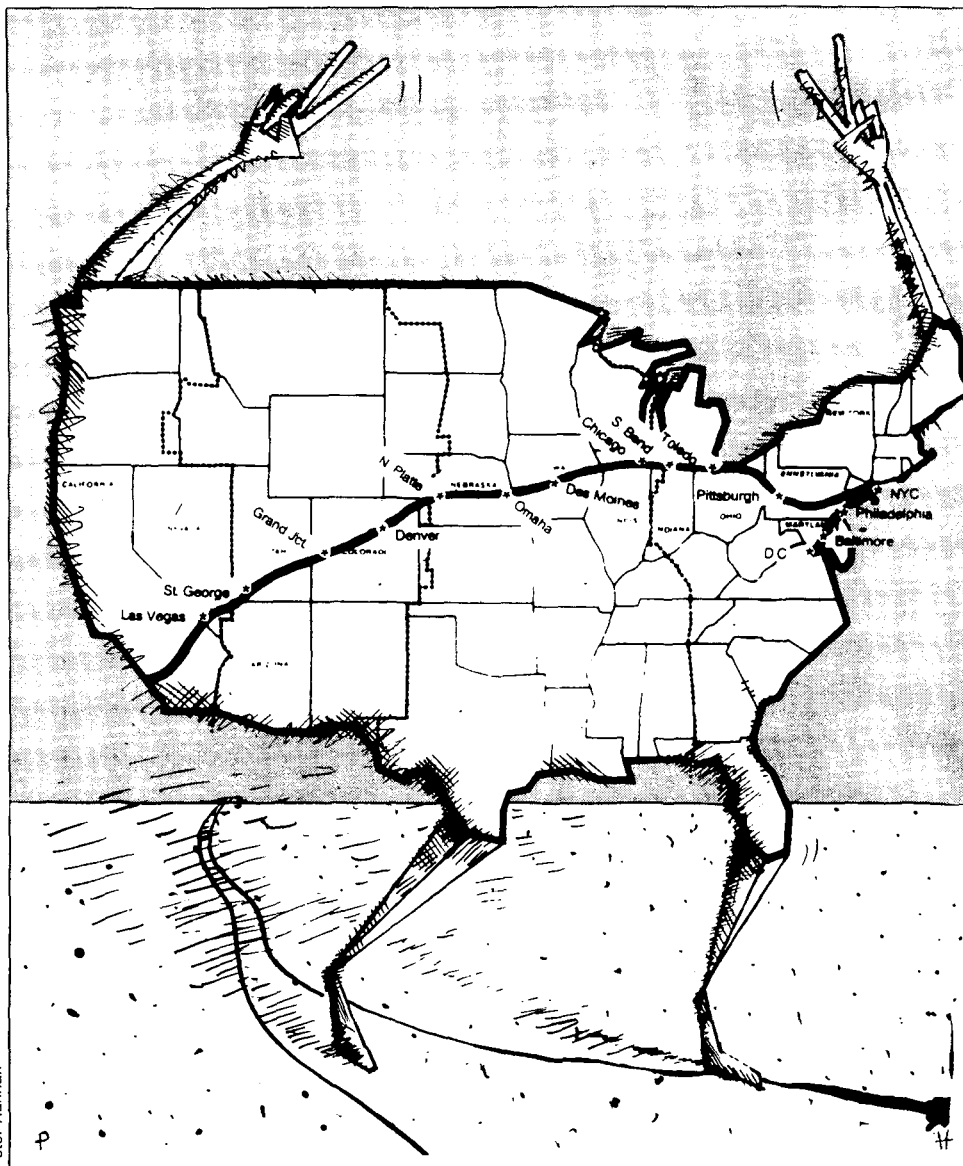
It's been endorsed by more than 200 organizations, with heavy support from religious and peace groups. Milwaukee Archbishop Rember Weakland put two staff positions into organizing the march. Corpus Christi Bishop Thomas Gumbleton gave it an enthusiastic endorsement. Film stars won it early media attention—the first big financial help came from Paul Newman and Barbra Streisand. And while it is officially non-partisan, it's also gotten endorsement from two prominent peace Democrats, U.S. Reps. Ron Dellums of California and Patricia Schroeder of Colorado. So far, the Machinists' William Winpisinger is its most prominent labor endorser.

But PRO-Peace also has its critics, some of them in the peace movement. Its central demand—"Take the weapons down"—strikes some as simplistic, even apolitical. Holding a non-partisan march in a big congressional election year is criticized as a drain of movement energy and resources. Depending on your source, PRO-Peace can seem either a bold, new and absolutely necessary organizing effort, or a glitzy, overambitious media gimmick. But then, some of its boosters will frankly admit, it's probably a lot of both.

A moral force

PRO-Peace is the brainchild of the 38-year-old Mixner, a Democratic Party fundraiser and campaign consultant. A veteran of the civil rights and anti-war movements, Mixner is better known lately for his attachment to candidates than to causes. He

DISARMAMENT



PRO-Peace plans for L.A. to D.C. march

moved to Los Angeles from a stint in Colorado Democratic Party organizing in 1977 to run Tom Bradley's re-election campaign. Last year he managed Colorado Sen. Gary Hart's successful California primary effort. In the meantime, he's also been active on gay rights issues, directing the campaign that defeated the 1978 anti-gay Briggs initiative here.

But last year, he says, the threat of nuclear war took on paramount political and personal importance for him. He traveled the country talking to politicians, pollsters, church leaders and peace movement people and became convinced that only a "powerful moral force" could inspire "the long-term action, the greater commitment, the greater sacrifice" necessary to halt the arms race.

The Great Peace March, Mixner believes, can provide that moral force. He's full of praise for other peace movement groups. "We're the result of the good work that's already been done," he's quick to note. But their efforts, he says, have demanded only minimal gestures from supporters—signing petitions, contributing money, perhaps phonebanking or canvassing. PRO-Peace, by contrast, "asks people to give up their jobs, their homes, their daily existence, to sleep in a tent for nine months," Mixner says. "And I'm a man who likes room service."

Along the march route Mixner envisions demonstrations of support by local citizens, and of course lots of media coverage. Six regional offices will recruit marchers as well as organize support along the route, with special attention paid to college campuses. Mixner points to campus actions against apartheid as evidence that students are looking for causes again, and he believes PRO-Peace can reach even the apathetic or conservative. At the University of California-Irvine, in conservative Orange County, he notes, students have pledged to raise \$15,000 toward one of six "community" tents needed for the march.

Organizing community support for the march is made easier by the long list of groups endorsing the project. But so far,

the national Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign is conspicuously missing from the list. State freeze groups in Texas, Maryland and Utah have backed the march; in California, New York and Pennsylvania there's been less enthusiasm.

The differences between PRO-Peace and the Freeze can seem a little like a turf squabble. After all, just three years ago the Freeze was the peace movement's new hope; now PRO-Peace is the bright young thing; getting all the attention from the media and, as important, from funders. And ironically, some of the arguments Freeze activists use against PRO-Peace's approach—that the effort is unrealistic and apolitical—were once used to dismiss the Freeze.

But the Freeze has evolved in response to political lessons, and some of its leaders believe those lessons have been lost on PRO-Peace. "I'm worried that the message won't be understood," says Jo Seidita, chair of the Southern California Freeze. "Freeze people have spent a lot of time trying to communicate about nuclear war, and what the Freeze is—that it's bilateral, verifiable, and just a first step. All PRO-Peace is saying is: 'Take them down.'"

Marvin Schacter of the Southern California Freeze has problems with the effort's tactics and timing. "I think it's a question of where the peace movement should be next year, in an election year," Schacter says. "And I think peace activists have realized the best way to make the movement a political force is through political action." With its emphasis on bipartisan outreach and detachment from electoral work, PRO-Peace is effectively "apolitical," Schacter says.

Not peace imperialists

From within PRO-Peace, there's a two-track response to the criticism. Mixner tries to be diplomatic. "We wouldn't be here without the Freeze. They've had astounding success in several areas—in making people think about what will happen if the bomb falls, and realize that it's likely to happen. But we've tried not to duplicate what's already being done. There's no

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reason for us to do lobbying—there's SANE and the Freeze. There's no need for our own PAC—there's Freeze Voter and other peace PACs.

"And people don't have to make a choice between elections and what we're doing. I'm certainly not going to argue that mine is the more righteous way, better than supporting candidates. We're not peace imperialists." But he denies that PRO-Peace lacks a clear message or program. "We're abolitionists. I'm always amazed when people say we don't have a program—we've got one: Take them down."

Mixner acknowledges that his plans to make PRO-Peace "bilateral," with actions in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, are less solid. In early interviews he proposed a peace march into East Berlin and civil disobedience at the Berlin Wall, as well as establishing satellite communication with unofficial Soviet peace groups and the citizenry there. "We have to accept responsibilities for the Eastern bloc.... That's why we're willing to go to jail in East Germany if necessary, or in the Soviet Union, if necessary," Mixner told the *L.A. Weekly* last spring. Time, and some criticism, has made him reluctant to make such pronouncements now. "It's too far off to say anything definite, but we're still talking to people," he said.

Field Director Tim Carpenter, an Alliance for Survival veteran, takes a more pragmatic approach to criticism that PRO-Peace is "apolitical." "Nothing could be farther from the truth," Carpenter says. "We've been attentive to groups with an electoral agenda, and we hope to complement their efforts." He points to big 1986 U.S. Senate races in California and Colorado, where Alan Cranston is said to be facing tougher than usual re-election odds and U.S. Rep. Tim Wirth will likely look to succeed presidential hopeful Gary Hart. The peace march through those states can't help but provide peace candidates opportunities to galvanize support, Carpenter believes.

It can also provide the peace movement with new lines to supporters, in the form of a computer list of a projected five million names that PRO-Peace promises to share with its endorsers. "Right now the anti-nuclear movement has little more than 100,000 names on its lists," Carpenter notes.

PRO-Peace's central demand—"Take the weapons down"—strikes some as simplistic, even apolitical.

But some of the Freeze campaign's toughest concerns have to do with the structure of PRO-Peace. It is very much Mixner's show, in a movement that is fond of coalition and consensus. "We're not a coalition organization, though we're accessible, we seek input and advice, we've tried to get ideas about content," Mixner says. "But we're trying to make a dramatic jump in a short time, to do something of a large-scale nature that requires attention to incredible detail—what color tents, how much toilet paper. It's just not conducive to a coalition organization."

The Freeze campaign has submitted a list of questions to PRO-Peace, mainly focusing on the group's decision-making and accountability process, that it would like to have answered before it makes an endorsement decision this month. But the Freeze could wind up endorsing the march, regardless of its reservations, as a tactical decision. "They're here and they're going to do it, and a lot of people feel there's a need for something dramatic and visible to put our issue out there," says Chris Brown, member of a Freeze committee that's studying the endorsement. "We may endorse with reservations about the process, in order to say, 'We're glad there's somebody out there who's willing to walk across the country for peace.'"

By Michael Tangeman

MEXICO CITY

A LATIN AMERICAN DEBT MORatorium. It's an idea that sends chills through the board rooms of the industrialized world's largest banking and lending institutions. It's also a possibility that is being discussed more and more in intellectual, government and even business circles in a region saddled with a \$360 billion foreign debt and where societies are being dislocated by lender-imposed austerity measures.

The debt crisis is tied to the oil boom of the mid-'70s, when lenders burdened with petro-dollars offered attractive, low-cost financing to the lesser developed countries. Traditionally dependent on single-commodity exports and tied inextricably to commodity markets in the industrialized world, many Third World countries borrowed heavily to finance economic diversification and development. They soon found themselves caught in a vicious cycle—borrowing just to meet the interest payments on a spiraling foreign debt.

The fortunes of the Mexican economy are tied to the rise and fall of the price of oil on the world market. In 1984 Mexico's petroleum sales accounted for 69 percent of the country's export earnings, with nearly half of all petroleum sales to the U.S. The oil situation reflects the asymmetrical, "dependency" relationship of the Mexican economy to that of the U.S.: two-thirds of all Mexican exports go to the U.S., while two-thirds of all Mexican imports are from the U.S.

When the price of oil dropped on the world market in 1982, Mexico's economy went down with it. The country announced a 90-day suspension of debt payment, but international lenders' fears were soon put to rest when U.S.-educated President Miguel de la Madrid and his group of "young technocrats" took office later that year. By mid-1984, the technocrats had successfully rescheduled the debt, repaid

Behind Mexico's share of the Third World debt

U.S. Treasury emergency loans extended during the 1982 crisis and came close to meeting International Monetary Fund (IMF) demands of cutting public deficit spending and keeping inflation down.

But increasing protectionism by the industrialized nations and a series of production cutbacks and price drops initiated in October of 1984 by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) sent the Mexican economy into another tailspin. While the government is blaming the renewed crisis on "flaws in implementation" of its economic policies and not the policies themselves, critics here say the technocrats have been too willing to implement IMF-style austerity measures as a prerequisite for recovery.

Rather than increasing cuts in public spending, says economist Clemente Ruiz Duran, the government should be concentrating on the strain that debt repayment places on the economy. "If we eliminate the payment of interest on the debt," Ruiz Duran told the newsweekly *Proceso*, "the deficit of the public sector would be converted to a surplus."

But the De la Madrid administration seems unable to admit it has taken the wrong approach to solving the country's economic ills. On July 18 Finance Secretary Jesus Silva Herzog said unapologetically, "The strategy followed during the last three years is correct. No other is better."

Nevertheless, the strategy followed didn't help the technocrats much when it came to forecasting the economic future. The difference between the government projections and what actually occurred during the first six months of this year was like day and night. The De la Madrid team projected a 7 percent drop in oil export earnings, due to the price and production

cuts on the world market. In fact, they were not too far off track with a 8.3 percent drop in petro-exports for the first five months of the year. But instead of a projected 12 percent increase in non-petroleum exports, economic figures showed a 15 percent decrease by June 1. A surge in U.S. protectionism and compensatory duties on textiles and finished steel products were partly responsible for an 11 percent drop in exports of manufactured goods. Agricultural exports decreased 25 percent, the result of stringent U.S. pesticide and herbicide regulations combined with protectionist measures backed by Florida citrus growers.

Yet it was skyrocketing imports in the first semester that completely upset the trade balance. Instead of a mild 11 percent increase in imports, the economy registered a 40 percent hike—the public sector's ability to hold its imports to 15 percent barely offset a 60 percent jump in imports by the private sector. With exports down and imports way up, the government found itself faced with a 42 percent drop in the balance of trade surplus over last year. Rather than the projected \$10 billion surplus, the De la Madrid team was suddenly looking at a surplus of \$7 billion—down nearly \$5 billion from 1984. President De la Madrid's response was a five-point austerity plan announced on July 22.

The program includes the administration's third cut since 1982 in public expenditures, plus a budget reduction of 150 billion pesos (\$532 million dollars), the layoff of 23,000 public employees and the reassignment of 28,000 others. It also includes liberalization of foreign trade—a move that should be welcomed by Washington—a 20 percent devaluation of the controlled-rate peso and increasing internal revenues through more efficient tax collection. It will

strengthen the nation's financial reserves by increasing the amount of holdings banks must keep on reserve with the country's central bank.

Economist Ruiz Duran claims the government's effective tightening of the money supply will lead to higher interest rates and inflation, while the National College of Economists released a statement saying government spending cuts, layoffs and its policy of holding down wages will contribute to decreased consumer demand and economic stagnation.

Despite the criticism, the De la Madrid administration's unwillingness to confront its creditors head on—and its conspicuous absence in an official capacity from the Havana conference—is somewhat understandable, as Fidel Castro pointed out in his closing address at last month's Third World debt conference in Havana (see *In These Times*, Aug. 21). After all, Mexico has had its national territory invaded twice for failure to pay on its foreign debt—once in 1861 by French, Spanish and British troops; and again in 1914 by U.S. Marines who seized the customs house at Veracruz.

In addition, the country has the distinction of being the only Latin American nation to have lost half its territory as a result of U.S. aggression: after the Mexican-American war, what is now the U.S. Southwest was annexed to the U.S. in the 1853 Treaty of La Mesilla. With Mexico's economy so dependent on the U.S. and being an immediate neighbor to the "colossus of the north," Mexico stands to lose more in a debt rebellion than most other Latin American nations.

But an increasing number of Mexicans seem unable to accept the government's belt-tightening strategy in the face of its obvious unwillingness to confront the international creditors. Even business leaders are now asking the administration to look into a possible renegotiation of the debt in order to give them some room to breathe in the midst of the current crisis.

Michael Tangeman is a free-lance journalist based in Mexico.

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By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

THE RAINBOW WARRIOR SINKING provided a disturbing revelation of the extent to which their nuclear nationalism has isolated the French from their neighbors in Europe. "The scandal is that in France there is no scandal," observed the *Frankfurter Rundschau*.

While Gaullist "servant of the state" Bernard Tricot was whitewashing the Mitterrand government and the DGSE (General Direction of External Security)—whose agents are accused by New Zealand of sinking the Greenpeace flagship in Auckland harbor last July 10 as it was preparing a campaign against French nuclear testing in the South Pacific—another spy scandal broke in West Germany. French television jumped on the story with glee, hinting that getting caught blowing up a pacifist protest boat was a mere virile peccadillo compared to the disgrace of having offices penetrated by East German spies. And indeed, the head of Bonn counterintelligence was soon having to resign, while the French spooks stayed on to read the nice things Tricot wrote about them in his report to Prime Minister Laurent Fabius (see *In These Times*, Sept. 4).

Tricot seemed particularly charmed by the three combat divers, in hiding back in France, who had been hanging around the New Zealand coast in the rented sailboat *Ouvea* just before the *Rainbow Warrior* was sabotaged. The three frogmen had been trained at the Aspretto divers school near Ajaccio in Corsica for precisely such a job, and the *Ouvea* vanished in mid-Pacific after a police search on the Australian island of Norfolk reportedly turned up traces of the same explosive that sank the *Rainbow Warrior*.

But Tricot believed these "excellent sportsmen" when they told him their mission had been to infiltrate the New Zealand population in order to "foresee and anticipate" the Greenpeace campaign and "reflect" on ways to counter it. As proof of their infiltration, Tricot noted in his report that "our compatriots paid sustained attention to the feminine parts of the population." *Vive la France!* "But this was true, of course," he added prudishly, "only for the bachelors...."

New Zealand Prime Minister David Lange correctly pointed out that the Tricot report was too transparent even to be a good whitewash. But the Tricot tone of wide-eyed innocence added to the hilarity of this enjoyable summer entertainment. It was hard to remember that a man, photographer Fernando Pereira, was killed in the bombing, especially since his death was scarcely mentioned in France.

The first Louis Harris poll on the affair showed 50 percent agreeing that "a country like France doesn't have the right to use methods such as were employed against the Greenpeace boat." Yet much larger majorities were opposed to making anyone resign, and 70 percent expected that the Tricot report would "hide part of the truth." And 19 percent said the secret services were right to use force to prevent the Greenpeace campaign but "shouldn't have got caught." That 19 percent included a high percentage of the most influential part of the population: male executives.

German Green spokesman Lukas Beckmann called the affair "the culmination of a French militarism which has been further reinforced under the Socialists and which confirms the return of the Napoleonic spirit in France." In Denmark, former socialist Foreign Minister Kjeld Olesen announced that he was ready to join the Greenpeace crew to protest against French nuclear tests.

Major shortcomings

The young Prime Minister Laurent Fabius seemed more aware than most of the French political class of the damage being done to the French image and rapidly acknowledged that "interrogations subsist" after the Tricot report. He called on Defense Minister Charles Hernu to remedy "major shortcomings" in the functioning of the



"I hope that despite this little misunderstanding you will continue to vote Socialist."

FRANCE

Mitterrand's new nuclear nationalism

DGSE. As an embryonic measure of parliamentary control, the prime minister ordered the responsible cabinet ministers to submit henceforth a "detailed annual report" on activities of the secret services to the chairmen of the defense commissions of the two houses of parliament.

The Communist Party (PCF), which had been calling for parliamentary control similar to that in other Western countries (except Britain), was totally dissatisfied. And there is a precedent. The Socialist government promised to inform parliament of arms export sales contracts. This has boiled down to a brief biannual note giving only totals by branch (land, sea, air or electronic) and broad geographic zone. The PCF wants parliamentary watchdog committees to be given a mandate to check up on the secret services.

The right characteristically objected to even the toothless "control" proposed by Fabius. "The secret services are not made for reporting to parliament, to the adversary, to the eventual enemy," said Jean Lecanuet.

Fabius asked New Zealand authorities to communicate the result of their investigations to French judicial authorities and promised prosecution of persons committing criminal acts. New Zealand Prime Minister David Lange allowed this tacit acknowledgement that French citizens might actually be implicated to assuage his anger over the Tricot whitewash.

But Fabius added: "As a nuclear power and a Pacific power, we have to defend what we consider France's interests in that region. Now, there are machinations contrary to our interests: no one, in particular among those who encourage that sort of thing, can be surprised that we are vigilant to maintain those interests." In the suspi-

cious view of the French defense community, these "machinations" are the work of the perfidious "Anglo-Saxons" (British intelligence, Australia, New Zealand, Greenpeace, Canada and perhaps the CIA) all ganging up to expel France from the Pacific.

The *Ouvea* crew, suspected of actually blowing up the *Rainbow Warrior*, came from the combat swimmers training center (CINC) at Aspretto in Corsica. The male member of the "Turenge" couple, in jail in New Zealand and suspected of providing on-shore support to the *Ouvea* crew, is in reality the former number-two officer at the Aspretto base, Alain Maffart. A recent book on the DGSE and its predecessor the SDECE called *La Piscine*—the swimming pool, nickname for the agency because its offices are located across the street from a swimming pool—recounts that the Aspretto base was close to revolt over the 1981 election of a left-wing government. The 1972 Common Program of the French left had promised to abolish the SDECE. In reality, it was re-organized as the DGSE.

Covering up the trails

As organizer of a secret network of war veterans during the Nazi occupation (which became the constituency that launched him on his post-war political career) and a former interior minister, Francois Mitterrand could not seriously have imagined governing without secret services. During the Common Program period, he turned for counsel to Lyon businessman Francois de Grossouvre, who in the Cold War period of the '50s had organized a secret SDECE network that was supposed to lead sabotage and resistance in case of a Communist takeover in France. (The scenario called for a provisional government to lead the resistance from Morocco.) Grossouvre was a special security adviser to Mitterrand at the Elysée until last June.

To cure the SDECE of its known propensity to go off and do "dirty tricks," the Socialists thought for a while of detaching it from the Defense Ministry and putting it directly under the president or the prime minister. But this would have been political-

ly dangerous: in case of a *bavure* (snafu) like the *Rainbow Warrior* affair, the bloody trail could lead straight to the head of state.

Instead, the SDECE was kept under Defense Minister Charles Hernu, who brought in fellow Free Mason and former Air France executive Pierre Marion to reorganize it as the DGSE. Marion was soon replaced by Admiral Pierre Lacoste, as present chief. Hernu is thus in the position of the "fuse" that can "blow" in case of scandal to keep it from striking his boss Mitterrand.

But despite frequent if unconfirmed reports that Hernu himself had set the ball rolling by throwing a temper tantrum against Greenpeace, time passed and the defense minister remained. Many Socialists feel that Hernu is indispensable because, as a favorite of the military, he protects Mitterrand from the wrath and plots of the militarist right, which would be let loose by his dismissal.

The sad fact is that the main method adopted by the governing Socialists for "controlling" militaristic right-wingers in the armed forces and secret services has been to adopt their priorities. The possession of nuclear weapons ties the French political class to the national illusion that France can continue to be a "great power" in the world second only to the two Superpowers. This is a role increasingly beyond the country's means.

A more modest self-image and a more peaceful approach to world problems would probably enhance France's influence in the world and stimulate more fruitful intellectual explorations than the current twin obsessions of technology and strategy. But the leaders remain bound to the bomb. Nobody dares break the consensus around the *force de frappe* as guarantee of national independence and importance. Especially since a conventional substitute would be even more expensive.

The rising cost of modern military might is pushing France into an inextricable contradiction. To keep up its illusion as a nuclear great power, France needs both a sense of nationalism and a partnership with Germany. These two things do not go well together, despite limp efforts to conjure up sentiments for "Europe."

Greenpeace has only 5,400 members in France, compared to 300,000 in West Germany. The voluntary financing, internationalism and crusading enthusiasm for the planetary environment and Greenpeace are simply incredible, if not downright sinister, to most in France. Whereas in Germany, many would agree with Lukas Beckmann when he warns that the revival of the "Napoleonic spirit" in France is working for a dangerous militarization of Western Europe. ■

The Greenpeace incident reveals France's isolation.



Peter Hannan

A Story of Soviet Jewish Immigrants in the Promised Land

By Polly Howells

SOMEONE WHO HAD NOT VISITED Brighton Beach, Brooklyn, since the late '60s would find it much changed today. The main shopping street, Brighton Beach Avenue, is sprinkled with Cyrillic shop signs. Russian restaurants adorn every block and on Brighton 7th Street just off the boardwalk there is a blue canopy on a large apartment building. On one side it reads "Salomon House" and on the other *Dom Salomona* in Russian. Although there are still elderly, Yiddish-speaking residents, the streets now abound with young families and teenagers, Russians intermingled with Third-World people.

Brighton Beach, 50 blocks of small wooden houses huddled behind hulking brick apartment buildings of faded grandeur, is said to have the largest Soviet-born population anywhere outside of the USSR. More than 30,000 Soviet emigrés (out of a total of 300,000) have settled here over the past 14 years. Since Brighton is, in effect, a Russian-Jewish ghetto, its immigrant residents are assimilating into the American mainstream more slowly than those in smaller Russian communities around the country. Russian-language resources in the area are sufficient to enable dependents to live here secluded and never learn English. This is a community where one can learn much about Soviet life.

As a social worker helping Russian adolescents and their families, I have spoken with many of these Soviet-born families over the past three years about their immigration experience. My purpose has been to facilitate their adjustment, which has afforded insight into the process they are going through. But my sample is not random—the people I speak with are a self-selected "troubled" population.

The inevitable question, "Why did you come here?" has met with answers at various levels of understanding. But the one that has stuck with me—because I have encountered it repeatedly in different guises over the years—is the first one I received when a man I shall call Slava interviewed for a staff position for our project. An actor from the prestigious Taganka Theater in

Moscow, the middle-aged Slava had been quite well known in the Soviet Union. He answered my question by saying, "To get away from the lie. Everything there is one big lie."

I suggested that there are many lies here, too, and he made the slightly condescending shrug that has become so familiar to me when I discuss politics with Soviet emigrés. He said simply, "It's not the same." Slava had been here only a few months, spoke very little English, and was deeply unhappy. He had found a job in a plastics factory and was mourning the loss of his homeland and—he hoped temporarily—his profession.

I have become acquainted with the lies these immigrants lived with, both through their reactions to the American environment and from stories they tell of their lives in the Soviet Union. As one who went through the sometimes grueling personal struggles of the New Left in the late '60s and early '70s, I've found the process of getting to know these emigrés and the values they espouse sometimes shocking and often painful. For however much many of us on the left disclaim any fondness for the Soviet Union, there remains a hope that someday the ideals of the revolution will be achieved in the Soviet Union. The cynicism and bitterness of the emigrés can go a long way to discourage such dreams.

Class consciousness.

One of the first attitudes I encountered among the emigrés was an overt class consciousness that rivaled anything I have heard among Americans. Except for a few spouses, the people we work with are all Jews. But Jews from Leningrad or Moscow look down on Jews from the southern republics. This parallels the general social distinctions in the Soviet Union. People who live in the "center," Moscow or Leningrad, have a higher status than those in the hinterlands. In fact, Soviets are allowed to live in these favored cities because they have achieved status within their professions or within the party, or because they have carried favor.

These class attitudes have traveled to New York. The more affluent and middle-class Russian emigrés who live elsewhere

look down on the Brighton Beach community. Some party there on the weekends, but they would not live there. They say such things as, "You know, Brighton Beach is full of people from Odessa," with a knowing smile. Odessans are second only to Soviet Georgians in their reputation for shady deals. A similar snobbism was expressed by a 19-year-old boy who had moved with his family to Staten Island. He was part of an informal "rap" group that had gotten onto the topic of refundable bottles and cans. He said with disgust, "That's what the Russians in Brighton Beach do, go around picking up bottles on the street to make a living!"

Another former socialist ideal that has largely been forgotten is that of "Soviet internationalism," the idea that the USSR is a union made up of equal and semi-autonomous national republics. It used to be known as the *bratskaya syemya Sovetskikh narodov*, or the "fraternal family of Soviet peoples." The Jews have always had an unusual place in this family. During and immediately after the revolution, Jewish intellectuals held important positions in the Communist Party.

Today, Jews have their national identity stamped in their internal passports, but Judaism is not recognized as an organized religion and they have no separate provincial government or land. In fact, Stalin tried to solve the "Jewish problem" by creating, in the very far east, the Autonomous Jewish Province of Birobidzhan. Very few Jews emigrated there, being a largely sophisticated urban and European population, and today it is still populated with indigenous tribal peoples. But even if they did live on their own land with a Jewish provincial government, their status would probably not have been raised. The national republics have very little autonomy.

Soviet Jews in Brighton Beach are intensely confused about their cultural identity. In Russia they were known as Jews; here they are universally called Russians. They were somewhat ambivalent about being Jewish in the Soviet Union, but they are not ambivalent about their dislike for ethnic Russians. The only positive sense of being Jewish for most of these people consisted of vague family stories of grandpa-

rents' religious practices, along with a defensive pride in the achievements of secular Jews like Einstein, Marx and Isaac Babel.

Typically, those from the center were more assimilated and less stigmatized as Jews than those from outlying provinces. I spoke with a girl from Leningrad who said she didn't know she was Jewish until she was eight years old. On the other hand, a boy from Dnieperpetrovsk told me he was taunted his whole childhood with the epithet *zhid* (analogous to "kike") and always felt "different" from Russian kids.

Not a perfect fit.

The fact that these Soviet-born children felt either like non-Jews or defended against being seen as "bad Jews" in the Soviet Union makes it difficult for them when American Jewish agencies try to help them feel like "good Jews." The Zionist propaganda that promoted emigration on the grounds that Soviet Jews were seeking religious freedom led the American Jewish community to expect something very different from the emigrés who arrived here. Early on, Jewish publications expressed hopes that the influx of Soviet Jews would revitalize the spiritual life of American Jews. Yeshivahs (orthodox Jewish schools) in Brooklyn lowered their fees for the immigrants and the immigrants at first sent their children there, thinking they would be more protected and better educated than in the public schools.

But the fit was far from perfect. Many Yeshivahs demand a certificate that the boy-child had a Bris (a ritual circumcision) before they admit him. Soviet children, Jews included, are not circumcised. So many parents went out and had their school-age boys circumcised. (An even more extreme story I heard was that of a 40-year-old emigré man who wanted to get married in a synagogue and was told he had to be circumcised first. When he refused, they contacted his 80-year-old mother to see if she could convince him to undergo the operation.)

And then the Yeshivahs expect the children to dress conservatively (which these children, newly exposed to the vast variety of Western styles, do not want to do), and to learn Hebrew (when they need to learn

English first). Most emigré children spent a couple of years in Yeshivahs and then transferred to public schools.

Most of the immigrants I have met are not interested in religion, but they do want to be American and Jews (in that order). Alex, an 18-year-old who had been here five years, lives in a roomy Brighton Beach apartment. His father works as a civil servant and his mother as a chamber-maid. He said to me, "We are now a middle-society (middle-class) American family."

When I asked him what made him think that, he replied that his family celebrates American holidays like July Fourth and Thanksgiving rather than Soviet holidays.

I then asked what Soviet holidays other immigrants celebrate, and he said, *Pervoye Maya* (May Day) or *Vosmoye Marta* (International Women's Day).

Finally I asked about Jewish holidays, and he said that when they first arrived and he attended the Lubavitcher (ultra-orthodox) Yeshivah, he used to try to teach his parents about Jewish holidays. But they never got used to them. "They spent so many years not believing in God, they can't start now. It's a little easier for me."

A visitor to the Soviet Union who has seen the posters proclaiming world peace and friendship—which feature cherubic black, yellow and white children sitting peacefully together—must also be amazed by these Soviet Jews' racism. Alex came into our office recently, shortly after a black receptionist had been hired. When he got in my room he closed the door and asked, "Who's that nigger?" He then added, "I hate them all. We would have been better off if Kennedy had not freed the slaves."

I suggested that his history was a bit off, and he said, "Oh, I know they weren't slaves before Kennedy, but he gave them all jobs and took them away from white people. And that was why Kennedy was shot, wasn't it?"

One wonders about the virulence of these feelings, which are quite common among the emigrés, though masked somewhat in the adults. One can hypothesize that they result from living in a country where the official anti-racist line bears no relationship to what happens in reality.

One teenager from Kiev complained about the poetry of the Ukrainian national poet Shevchenko. He said that the poet regularly used the word *zhid* in his verses and received official accolades rather than criticism. Of course, the racism these immigrants express is also a result of being displaced and feeling insecure, having been set down in a neighborhood where blacks and Puerto Ricans have a better grasp on the workings of welfare and other systems than they do.

Although women were put to work early in the Soviet era, and 90 percent of Soviet women work outside the home, this has not produced the sexual equality that patriotic posters of young, vibrant male and female workers moving "Forward!" together proclaim. For, as the Soviet family became re-entrenched after the early tumultuous years of the revolution, the Soviet mother became idealized as the bastion of this family. Soviet women work full time, but they also have full responsibility for cooking, cleaning and childrearing. Soviet—and former Soviet—women have a hard time understanding American feminists' desire to join the workforce. For them, freedom would mean the freedom to stay home.

Galina, a 37-year-old married woman with a teenage daughter, told me that International Women's Day is one of the most beloved holidays in the Soviet Union. But it is a far cry from what it is here. Galina compared it to our Valentine's Day and Mother's Day combined. Women stay home from work and their men scour the private-sector markets looking for fresh flowers—a thankless task in early March in the Soviet Union. Then they cook dinner for the family and take care of their wives as they never do the rest of the year. Galina was completely unaware that March 8 is celebrated in the U.S. by women marching in the streets.

Among the couples I've talked with, the women were often the ones who had dragged their feet when the idea of emigrating

had come up. And their fears have been partially borne out.

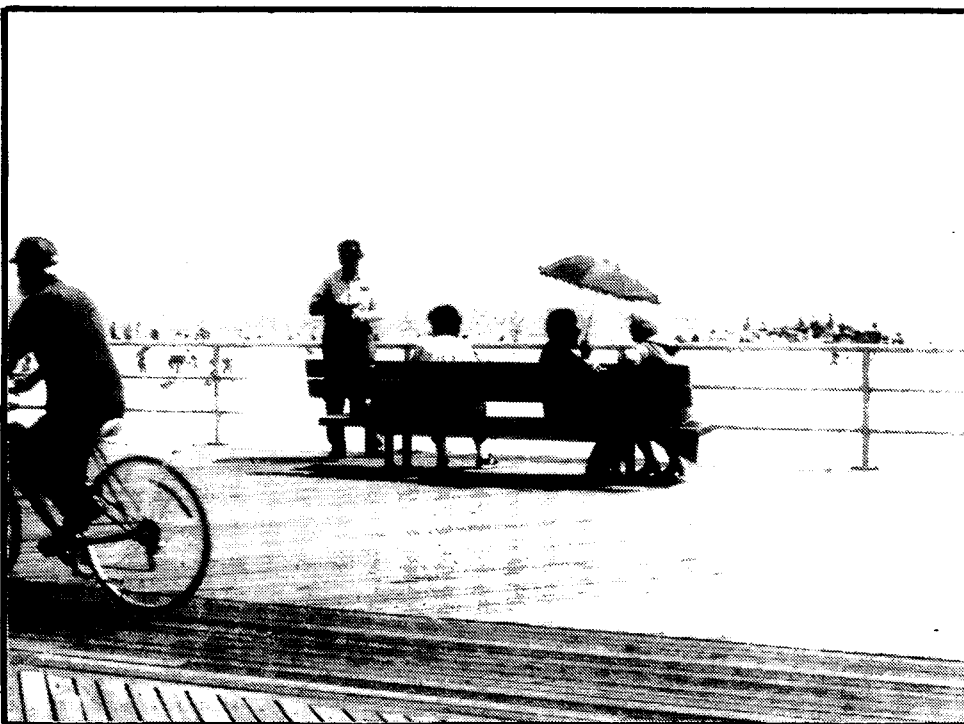
Galina believed that in America she would not have to work. But they quickly discovered that they could not live on her husband's income alone. Although women had dual careers in Russia too, there was more state support for this double role. Children could be placed in full-time day care from age one, and factories allowed women time off if their child was sick or otherwise in trouble.

The Soviet state, through its educational system, also takes a great deal of parental responsibility off the mothers' hands. The Russian word for education, *vospitanie*, means "upbringing," and connotes moral

The American New Left also emulated collective social organization. Inspired by socialist ideals, we struggled in the '60s and '70s to find collective ways of working, as did Soviet Communists early in the revolution. But over the years most Soviet collectives have simply come to mean agreement with the leader, compliance with the Party imposed from above.

"Guider by the hand"

Some American educators have extolled the Soviet educational system as a collective enterprise. In 1970 Urie Bronfenbrenner—in *Two Worlds of Childhood: U.S.A. and USSR*—admired the way Soviet children are encouraged to help each other with their



and spiritual elements that our "education" does not involve. If a child has trouble at school, the school, local party and union officials meet with the parents and tell them what to do. Though the system infantilizes, it also protects.

In America, both mother and father work long hours, but the parenting falls totally on the mother's shoulders. It's no wonder then that most of the women we see for help with their children are overwhelmed, overweight and depressed. Moreover, the burden of handling all the emotional pieces of family life has left them with very little energy to learn English. And many fewer emigré women than men are able to find employment here that approximates their jobs in the Soviet Union. Professional singers, metallurgists and engineers there are homemakers, babysitters and manicurists here.

The sexual attitudes of these women's teenage children are also surprisingly backward. Girls of 14 and 15 often have no knowledge of the facts of life or birth control. One 15-year-old from Azerbaijan assured me she will be a virgin until she is married because where she comes from they hang out the bloody sheets on the wedding night. These girls' mothers are either too preoccupied or too puritanical in their own thinking to discuss sexual issues with them. Meanwhile, in a local high school "rap" group, five Soviet-Jewish boys display a defensive "macho" precociousness as they compete with one another about how often each visits the local whorehouse.

Brighton Beach, Brooklyn, is now the home of 30,000 Soviet Jewish immigrants in a new-world ghetto.

homework, rather than to compete against one another. He spoke of how the rows of children in the classroom compete against one another for excellence. Then, in turn, the classes compete, as do the schools, districts, provinces and republics, all the way up. Children are expected to do their best for the team, to bring it glory.

The way this system actually works, however, at least in his experience, was described to me by my emigré colleague Dima. There are 10 grades in Soviet schools. In grades one through four, pupils have the same teacher for four years. This teacher is called the *rukovoditel*, or class manager. Literally, the word means "guider by the hand." From the fifth through the 10th grades, students go from subject to subject, but they still have one *rukovoditel* for all six years. They see this teacher once a week and receive guidance, formal lessons in behavior and Soviet morality.

During his senior year, Dima took his final exam in mathematics, which was being proctored by his *rukovoditel*. There were four problems in the exam, and the one in three-dimensional geometry was difficult. When she saw the class was having trouble with this problem, the *rukovoditel* took Dima's paper and copied his computation and answer, and then gave a copy to the person at the end of every row. The students passed the problem and its solution down each row, so the whole class got it

right. At the same time, Dima's mathematics teacher, who was monitoring another exam, had solved the problem himself and passed his solution to the students in that class. He relayed this information to Dima after the test.

Cheating, of course, is universal. What struck me about this story was the collusion between teacher and students. It was not important to these teachers that the students learned, but that their classes looked good in the eyes of higher authorities. The teachers' jobs and promotions depended on the performance of their classes as much as the students' futures did.

The Soviet-born students in Brooklyn often try to make me into the sort of *rukovoditel* they had in Russia. One girl, Alla, had failed French and begged me to take her to the assistant principal to get her grade changed. I said I would go with her, but didn't know what could be done. The assistant principal told Alla she couldn't pass her unless she did the work. Alla was distraught, and shortly thereafter dropped out of school.

The figure of *rukovoditel* provides a good metaphor for Soviet authority. Stern and moralistic (paternal), it is also malleable and nurturant (maternal). Pretending to be perfect, it is quite corruptible. Always looking over its shoulder at the higher authority, it is not dependable. The buck stops nowhere, except at the top, and that top is shrouded in mystery.

The Soviet emigrés I've met were not looking for freedom from such authority when they came to America. Rather they were looking for a less corruptible, more beneficent mother/father figure. They like Ronald Reagan because he fits the image personally and attitudinally. But local government agencies do not play a parental role the way they do in the USSR.

A 14-year-old boy who had recently arrived summed up their expectations and disappointments: "I thought I would be paid for going to school when I came to America," he said.

The emigrés have also found a kernel of truth in some Soviet myths about America. One woman said, "I didn't believe that all people care about in the U.S. is money. But I've begun to think it's true."

And Alex came in one day and said to me, "The Vietnam war was wrong, right? America had no right to be there." When I nodded, he said, "So why are they putting out movies like *Rambo* saying we were all heroes?" He continued on, "Another thing, in Russia they kept telling us about how America dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Is this true?" When I answered, "Yes," he said, "Well, then, how come I've never heard about it once since I've been here?"

American capitalism breeds Marxist dissidents and Soviet Communism creates anti-communist emigrés. Alex told me a piece of family history one day that touched me deeply. His grandfather had lived in Warsaw before the war. In 1936, fleeing Hitler, he went East to the Soviet Union, while his younger brother went West to America. The two corresponded regularly over the years, and the younger brother, living in Brooklyn, told Alex's grandfather that conditions in the U.S. were bad. When the emigration began, he advised them not to leave Russia.

Alex's grandfather stayed in the USSR, but his son and family decided to emigrate. They did not intend to come to New York, thinking their uncle would not sign for them (in order to settle in New York, Soviet emigrants have to have a relative here sign for them). But in Vienna they got a call from their uncle saying he would sign for them and had found them an apartment.

So they came to Brooklyn and lived in his building for a while. But, Alex related, his father and his uncle couldn't live close to one another for long because they were unable to have a conversation without arguing. "You see," he said, "my father's uncle is a Communist."

Polly Howells, C.S.W., is a caseworker in the Russian Adolescent Project of the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services and a psychotherapist in private practice in Brooklyn, N.Y.



PERSPECTIVE

By Alex Amerisov

ATTITUDES TOWARD countries of "presently existing socialism" are among the most divisive issues on the left. Today, when the United States is waging open warfare against Nicaragua, the resolution of this question is especially important because one's attitude toward the Soviet Union affects feelings toward Sandinistas.

About one difference

In the Soviet Union, the "nature" of presently existing socialism, its tendencies and its contradictions is a subject of continuous debate. In one of the recently published books there, the author enumerated more than a dozen different opinions about "primary production relations" under socialism—a must question for understanding any society, as far as Marxist political economists are concerned.

One thing is clear: with nationalization of means of production, the fetishism of relations that exists in capitalist societies disappears. Society is no longer viewed as an amalgamation of millions of separate entities, each going their own individual way, but as a community of associated working producers. This association is still despotic in the Soviet Union, but it is largely a direct, political, flesh-and-blood association. The world no longer presents itself through various masks. "Interest rates," "money supply," "market conditions," "inflation," "recession," "demand for labor" or lack of it are no longer seen as the real conditions of one's existence. Individuals no longer pretend to be the number one thing in the universe. They know that well-being and misery are closely connected to the lives of others. Society and its reflection, the state, present themselves as live, active forces, of which a particular individual is a part.

In capitalist societies, the level of fetishism depends on the level of socialization of production. The growth of monopolies and increasing interference by the government in the economy allows people to see that the economy is not guided by a mysterious "invisible hand," but by the self-interest of this or that group. But only in socialist societies, where most productive property is nationalized, does the masquerade come to an end. Human beings clearly become the makers of their own destiny. Realization of the goals of equality, brotherhood and cooperation become a possibility on the basis of growing



Soviet newsletter: debate on socialism

production. Real human freedom becomes the number one political aspiration.

Two articles in Pravda

On June 7 and June 21, *Pravda* ran two sharply contradictory articles, one by D. Valovoi, Doctor of Economics, another by O. Vladimirov. Both were given equal space in a column on "Problems of Theory."

Valovoi's article made four basic points: (1) profit, as an economic category, is "older than America." Its importance under socialism does not diminish but rises. It is a useful indicator of the overall efficiency of economic activity; (2) The principle of "equal pay for comparable work" has been the first principle of socialist economics since the time of New Economic Plan, except during certain periods under Stalin, "when the law of value was violated"; (3) each socialist country has the right to choose its own method of economic and social management, "taking into consideration their specific national peculiarities and traditions"; (4) "Socialism already has shown itself to be superior to capitalism, which cannot live without wasting lives of millions of unemployed and pursues irrational policy of capital-exports that drains the mother country of its 'vital juices.'"

O. Vladimirov's article, "The Leading Factor of Global Revolutionary Process," differs sharply on the first three points: (1) "Some academicians agitate for weakening of state levers of regulation"; (2) We had problems before but we have always worked them out within a previous structure. New "searchings" will just lead to "deterioration of socialist economics, violations of socialist justice and, as a result, to increase in social tensions"; (3) Countries of "socialist constellation" should not be allowed the freedom to make their own choices—"we all know what happened in some of them." "It is in our own interests that ranks of fraternal parties produce more Dimitrovs, Gottwalds, Thaelmanns"—leaders of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and pre-Nazi Germany who were subservient to Stalin.

Vladimirov does not want a reduction of the party's role simply to that of "an ideological depository." He wants the party to keep control of the economy and is campaigning for increased vigilance, defense spendings and for "tighter control" over Soviet allies. For him, presently existing society is the epitome of "socialist

justice."

In contrast, Valovoi's article represents the interests of Soviet managers. They want more freedom, especially a closer connection between their pay and performance. Looking around they see numerous opportunities that can be taken advantage of to increase output and profits—but they need two things: (1) the right to act on those opportunities and (2) a compensation system that would make it worth their while. Valovoi is not interested in social justice for everybody. Lenin is quoted—out of context—saying: "Differences in wealth will remain, even unjust differences, but exploitation of man by man will become impossible." Valovoi points out that it was never a goal of socialists to bring about "universal equality." For him profit will exist even in "conditions of fully developed communism." But while profit plays a different role under socialism than under capitalism, it still is a form of alienated labor that socialists strive to abolish.

Vladimirov is quite correct in saying that the transfer of the right of economic initiative from the party to company managers will undermine, in the long run, the party's grip on power. Can he do anything to stop it? Without such transfers, the economy will continue to stagnate. This transfer is beneficial because, on the one hand, it increases the number of "self-acting" individuals, and on the other makes it easier for workers to demand self-administration from their managers, who are viewed as other workers rather than as Party representatives.

One-party state

Robert Mugabe, the prime minister of Zimbabwe and the leader of its ruling party, said that the recent election there was a referendum on establishing a one-party state. After the election, he called on other parties to join him in building a socialist society. Some people may see it simply as a wish to become a dictator. In my view, this is only partially correct. Sudan, after a brief flirt with pluralism, produced another military coup that the majority of the country supported. To them, a one-party system is the only way to go. Neither of the countries is under attack from abroad. Both decided that they prefer a one-party state. Their "socialism" and "a one-party state" seem to go hand-in-hand. In Nicaragua, the one-party state for all practical purposes is a reality.

Those who think that Sandinistas are "trying desperately to avoid becoming another Soviet Union" are quite wrong. The opposite is true. American aggression does not let them fully consolidate their leadership and move as rapidly as possible to a centrally-planned one-party state.

Such a move would be in the interest of Nicaragua, and for a good reason. The main problem facing every Third World country is its underdevelopment. The local bourgeoisie is not strong enough to compete, not only in the world market, but even in its own "home." Left to its own devices, local business would become subservient to international corporations again. Only the concentration of productive resources in the hands of the state, and its rational use through long-term planning, can bring a country like Nicaragua out of poverty.

When the state becomes the owner of most means of production, the social basis for a multi-party system disappears. One-party becomes a possibility. Moreover, it is a necessary condition without which further social and economic development is impossible. Capital investments subtract from current consumption. Given that, no party in power would be willing to risk the chance of being voted out just because it reinvested a portion of GNP rather than allowing it to be consumed. Only a party that has no such fear can be an effective economic manager. Such political stability is vital for economic development to take place rapidly.

"Human rights"

Some of the ugliest features of Soviet reality are persecutions of political dissidents, lack of freedoms of speech, movement and political associations. When they became news, the ruling establishments in Western countries, especially the U.S., use them freely to equate socialists with repression. Reactions on the part of socialists are many. Some get embarrassed, some deny that the news is true, some find ways to excuse the persecution, some distance themselves even further from the Soviet Union and tell everybody that it is not really socialist but is something else.

But socialism is not a goal to be achieved or an "ideal" to strive for. It is a world-wide social movement for fundamental change in the way people live. Its goals are nothing but conceptualized reaction to specific conditions in which a suffering, downtrodden, persecuted portion of humanity lives. Its aim is the elimination of this suffering through the elimination of its causes. The conditions to which socialists respond in any country are specific, historically given and always provisional. There is no socialist model or plan.

If in the 19th century Marx could say that "briefly stated, the goal of communists is the abolition of private property," then today, for Soviet socialists that, naturally, cannot be the goal. Their goal should be the abolition of state property, through the abolition of the state as such, to be replaced with "free association" on the basis of common property. For countries like Nicaragua, the immediate goal is a consolidation of revolutionary gains—through the establishment of a one-party state on the basis of nationalized property. For those countries where private property is still politically dominant, like in the U.S., "abolition" of it is yet to come. The closer Soviet socialists get to the goal of free association, the easier it will be for socialists in America, and the opposite. Who knows? Maybe the U.S. will be able to escape the despotic socialism of a one-party state. If it does, no small reason for it would be due to the efforts of those who have given their aid to the struggle for "human rights" in socialist countries.

Alex Amerisov is a Soviet exile. He writes regularly for *In These Times*.

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PERSPECTIVE

Last hope for Mideast peace?

By Avraham Rozenkier
and Aaron Alpern

A FINELY WOVEN TAPES-try of recent events in the Middle East has remolded the region's political realities. These developments are modest when viewed individually, but together they form links in the chain of events that may lead to a real peace process.

The first link of this chain was the meeting between Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat last fall. That was followed by the re-establishment of political relations between Egypt and Jordan, and then came King Hussein's speech to the Palestinian National Council held in Amman, Jordan, last November. Hussein encouraged the PLO to negotiate directly with Israel on the basis of UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.

The next link was the Hussein-Arafat agreement with an initial endorsement by Egyptian President Mubarak and then tacit approval by the recently concluded Arab summit meeting in Casablanca.

Finally, there is the Reagan administration's apparent willingness to meet with a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation and the search—along the Amman-Washington-Jerusalem axis—for an acceptable Palestinian component for the purpose of advancing towards direct negotiations among Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians.

In this chain of contacts, each link is behaving ambiguously and uttering double-think, but still doing its utmost to prevent a rupture. Each participant has its own reasons for seeking a portal to peace.

The PLO, in the wake of Lebanon, is fragmented and battered. Arafat, more than ever before, finds himself dependent on Saudi Arabian petro dollars, Egyptian political support and Jordanian shelter. The PLO must realize that its refusal to play its so-called "trump card"—recognition of the state of Israel—may play it out of the peace process and transform it into a national group without territorial sovereignty, such as the Kurds, the Druze, etc.

Jordan fears Syrian aggression and Islamic fundamentalism, bred by Khomeini's Shi'ites. But political support from Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Iraq emboldens King Hussein to proceed cautiously toward peace negotiations.

In Israel, we must muster the political courage to distinguish between vital and trivial national interests. Our highest national priority should be an end to Israeli rule over 1.5 million oppressed Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The continued occupation of the territories has caused untold damage to Israel's political, social and economic fabric. Moreover, it feeds the ravenous appetite of Meir Kahane's racist views, of organized Jewish terrorism and of chauvinist nationalism.

Israel's position.

The internal Israeli debate focuses on three issues that severely limit Prime Minister Shimon Peres' political maneuverability. They are: the topics—a greater Israel or territorial compromise; the partners—who will represent the Palestinians; the framework—direct negotiations or an international forum.

We maintain that the time has come to jettison the ballast of obsolete views if we want to avoid the de facto transformation of Israel into a walled-in fortress surviving

from one war to the next and in the interim paying the material and spiritual price of the previous war's devastation.

These truths should have guided the judgments of the Israeli government in its response to the latest Jordanian initiative. But the "national unity" coalition, comprised of elements from the warlord Ariel Sharon to the doves of the Alignment, is not capable of moving in any direction. It can only unite around the false hope that the Jordanian initiative will wither away.

Peace, however, must be forged between warring sides. It would be an exercise in futility to sign a peace treaty with bogus Palestinian representatives. We learned this lesson in Lebanon, when Sharon forced a puppet Lebanese government to sign something less than a peace treaty and it quickly became clear it was not worth the paper it was written on.

The Americans understand this and are trying to persuade moderate PLO forces to join the peace process. Apparently, the American government would like to obtain—through preliminary discussions with a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation—PLO acceptance of 242 and 338 in exchange for American recognition of the legitimate national aspirations of the Palestinian people.

The Israeli government should welcome such a dialog, as it may bring legitimate Palestinian representation to the peace process. The willingness of Jordan and the PLO to proceed toward peace talks with Israel, on the basis of 242 and 338, represents a significant step forward in the political process. It is incumbent upon the Israeli government to meet this overture with a positive response.

But Prime Minister Peres has rejected this initiative under pressure of his "national unity" coalition and has made alternate proposals. His five-step "peace program" was not intended to stall for time. But this "time-out" will not result in progress, and we are liable to miss the last opportunity—as Hussein calls it—for peace before the outbreak of the next Middle East war.

The Israeli government's response to the Jordanian-Palestinian overture may block important developments in the Jordanian and Palestinian camps instead of encouraging them.

This is a tragic failure of the Israeli government. Every time there is a chance to broaden the political process, the blood pressure of this anemic government rises, and it accepts the veto of ministers who

seek to block the political process.

Addressing the Knesset during a recent debate on the political situation in the Middle East, MAPAM Knesset member Victor Shemtov criticized the government for "committing the political folly of refusing ever to speak with the PLO."

Shemtov, MAPAM's representative on the Foreign Affairs and Security Committee, scolded the government for harboring the illusion that Israel can manufacture "acceptable" Palestinians.

"You will not find a single Palestinian Arab, even in the occupied territories," he said, "who will agree to enter into negotiations on behalf of a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation without acknowledging that he speaks with the PLO's approval and in its name."

The agony of the Middle East is that Peres' hands are tied by his Likud partners in the "national unity" government, and Hussein's hands are tied by Arafat, who in turn is handicapped by the internal strife and power struggles within the PLO.

It is our view that:

1. Simultaneous mutual recognition between Israel and the Palestinians will create the conditions needed to conduct negotiations to solve the Palestinian problem within the framework of a Jordanian-Palestinian Confederation. The PLO and the Palestinians must recognize the state of Israel and Israel must recognize the Palestinians' right to self-determination—even if this means the end of the consensus within the PLO—already broken by the Abu-Musas and the Jibrils—and the end of Israel's "national unity" government.

2. Negotiations should be supported between Israel and a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation on the basis of UN resolutions 242 and 338.

3. Without the inclusion of Palestinian representatives in a joint delegation, there will be no solution to the Palestinian problem. Membership in the Palestinian National Council should not exclude Palestinian representatives from participation in the joint delegation, as the delegation will need to be sovereign in making decisions required to reach peace. One cannot determine the composition of the negotiating team of one's adversary.

4. There is no reason to oppose preliminary talks between the Americans and the Palestinians or between the Americans and a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, as active diplomatic steps are needed to create a suitable atmosphere for negotiations.

5. There should be no opposition to international sponsorship of talks or to an international conference at any given stage. Even so, it is clear that the key to reaching an agreement is direct negotiations between the opposing sides in the Middle East conflict.

Time is of the essence. The hourglass is running out in the quest for an agreed upon basis for negotiations prior to the end of 1985. That is the final date for initiating a governmental crisis leading to new Israeli elections without Shimon Peres and his Labor Party losing political credibility. Otherwise, the reins of government will be passively handed over to the right wing.

Prolongation of the conflict will result in renewed violence and terror and, inevitably, a spiraling chain of tragic consequences will follow.

Avraham Rozenkier is international secretary of MAPAM—the United Workers Party of Israel—a left socialist party that is now the major opposition party in the Israeli parliament. He is a member of the Kibbutz Yehiam. Aaron Alpern is director of MAPAM's American Desk and editor of the English-language monthly Progressive Israel. He is a member of Kibbutz Hatzor.



The Gospel of Peace & Justice



There is a new ferment among Christians today. Recently 200 top military leaders got together at the National War College, and a high-ranking general stated that, "The greatest challenge to all that we do now comes from within the churches."

Christian opposition to nuclear weapons, the arms build-up, and U.S. belligerence in Central America is what that challenge is about. At a time when our country in on a superpatriotic binge, Christians are taking their gospel mandate to be peacemakers seriously, and in a way that can hardly be dismissed as trendiness.

Also, at a time when indifference to racism is at a new high, Christians are playing a pivotal role in protests against U.S. complicity with apartheid. At a time when wars on poverty are out of vogue, Christians are bucking the spirit of the times and increasingly heeding the words of Christ that what we have failed to do for the poor and deprived we have failed to do for Him. Indeed, the Catholic bishops' pastoral on the U.S. economy contends that a basic criterion for evaluating economic policies is their impact on the poor.

Jerry Falwell has attacked the pastoral for coming close to "socialism." Since the bishops have called for beefed-up government programs to aid the poor and for economic democracy (including co-operative ownership of enterprises by workers), it is understandable that Falwell would be upset.

But strangely, few on the Left have noticed all this. Moreover, few realize that the present

Pope has called for "the priority of labor over capital" and for workers' ownership and self-management; few are aware that John Paul has been identified as "the first socialist pope" by *Newsweek* and that his economic views have acutely irritated apologists for business; few have paid much attention to the progressive social witness of the Protestant churches; and few are aware of the social change advocacy of Christians in Latin America, South Africa, Poland, the Philippines, and in the European peace movement.

Defenders of corporate or bureaucratic privilege and might-makes-right militarism have every reason to be leery of today's Catholics and Protestants. We at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW (an ecumenical monthly edited by lay Catholics) believe social radicalism is rooted in the gospel, and that Christians are compelled to succor the poor, champion the rights of labor, and quiet the gale winds of war. They are required — for theological and spiritual reasons — to say a decisive "NO!" to the idols of greed, consumerism, power, and national-interest-above-all.

Those who write for us include people like Juli Loesch, J.M. Cameron, Robert N. Bellah, Eileen Egan, Henri J.M. Nouwen, John C. Cort, and Robert Coles. We bat around the full range of theological, ethical, and social issues, and defy easy pigeonholing. Others have called us "feisty and gutsy," "influential," even "cheeky." If you want to know more about the vital and unique religious contribution to justice and peace, subscribe today!

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*Conference title taken from a 1982 poster (available from PHRC) which was printed by Israeli Committee in Solidarity with Birzeit University

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FEMINIST THEORY

How do women write?

The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature & Theory

Edited by Elaine Showalter
Pantheon Books, 403 pp., \$22.95

By Valerie Traub

DO WOMEN WRITE DIFFERENTLY than men? Is there an identifiable female aesthetic? Should feminists appropriate or eschew the writing of male theorists in developing a theory of their own? Is there a black female aesthetic? A lesbian aesthetic?

These are some of the questions raised in *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature & Theory*. The first book of its kind to concentrate solely on feminist theory rather than on textual interpretation, this anthology provides coherent coverage of most of the important debates that have shaped, and continue to shape, feminist criticism. These 19 essays represent the work of some of the most influential and controversial feminist critics of the last decade—Sandra Gilbert, Susan Gubar, Lillian Robinson, Barbara Smith, Annette Kolodny and Jane Tompkins, to name only a few. Showalter, the author of two important essays in the anthology, has selected both feminist

"classics" and newer works that promise to propel feminist theory toward exciting and even more fundamentally radical directions.

The first section, "What Do Feminist Critics Want? The Academy and the Canon," addresses the traditional, male-dominated institution of literary criticism, with Carolyn Heilbrun and Sandra Gilbert suggesting that feminist criticism will rejuvenate (indeed, already has rejuvenated) literary studies. The essays in this section argue from various angles "how

writing because they lack experience in deciphering women's particular systems of meaning.

Primarily, the anthology is directed toward other feminists developing critical theory. Not that these authors are preaching to the converted; far from it. Rather, they are engaged in an internal dialog of ongoing controversy, hashing out crucial, yet subtle differences in ideologies and strategies.

Often these writers are responding implicitly, if not explicitly, to each other's work, highlighting areas of disagreement as well as the political implications of critical methods. The strength of this volume, therefore, is the extent to which the current debates between feminist literary critics are articulated, counterposed and held in dialectical tension. Such dynamic energy should put to rest forever any reader's naive suspicion that all feminist criticism is the same or that feminism is a limited or confining ideology.

Literary greatness?

One debate represented by this anthology is between those who hope to develop a female "canon" analogous to the traditional "masterpieces" of Western literature, and those who, like Lillian Robinson in "Treasure Our Text:

*These essays
all ask: what is
literary
greatness?*

our concept of 'literature' has excluded, misinterpreted and misread women's work."

For instance, Annette Kolodny analyzes two rediscovered feminist classics, Susan Glaspell's *A Jury of Her Peers* and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*, to illustrate how the critical enterprise is itself gender-encoded: male critics are often unable to appreciate—and hence evaluate appropriately—women's

Feminist Challenges to the Literary Canon," seek to dismantle the concept of the "canon" altogether. A related area of contention, touched on by almost all of these critics, centers on aesthetics: what constitutes literary greatness? Are our traditional criteria of value implicitly male-centered? Do non-canonical, female-authored genres, such as 19th-century sentimental fiction (for example, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*) and popular women's novels of the 1980s (such as *The Women's Room* or *Kinflicks*) require, even suggest, counter-criteria? Concurrently, is there, and if so, what constitutes, a female aesthetic?

Readers may disagree with interpretations of individual works, or with generalizations derived from these readings; they may even, at times, suspect that individual readings were developed only in service to theory. However, the overall impression of this anthology is one of intellectual vigor and political sophistication. Perhaps most exciting is the volume's illustration of the growth of feminist theory as theory—that is, as a body of precisely developed methodologies—while simultaneously showing that staking a claim in academe does not consign feminists to complacency, political irrelevancy or co-optation.

Although many feminists disagree about the extent to which we should work within male-dominated institutions and also whether theories derived from male thinkers provide critical tools or only serve to thwart original feminist thinking, this volume illustrates that radical and innovative theory can come from work within academe. Although only one participant in this volume does not identify as a member of the academy, none of the contributors is any the less radical for this identification. Indeed, they are all dedicated to transforming not only our ideas concerning literature by or about women, but the entire discipline of literary and cultural studies.

In recent years, feminist critics have moved beyond exposing sexism in male texts, shifting their focus to the books of women writers and the theoretical problems posed by this work. If language and literature have been dominated by men—if, as Susan Gubar suggests, men have held the pen whereas women have embodied the "blank page"—then how do women relate to language as artists? What choices do they make—of word, syntax, metaphor, genre? Or, in Nancy Miller's terms, what narrative strategies, what "plots and plausibilities," are available to women writers to express their own experiences and visions?

Gynocriticism

In selecting for an anthology, an editor must consider the influence an article has had, the degree to which it catalyzes or resolves controversy, its availability through other publications and its contribution to the volume as a whole. Showalter's anthology covers a remarkable amount of terrain, deals with crucial and controversial questions and, indeed, represents a certain "state of the art" of feminist literary theory.

A few biases, however, are obvious. As mentioned above, all but one of the articles are written by academics—not necessarily a weakness, but definitely an issue to be addressed. In that some of the most significant feminist

theory, especially that of women of color, has come from women who have never entered the university or who have opted out of it as a political choice, this criterion of selection should at least be acknowledged.

Showalter's own bias is toward "gynocriticism," a term she has coined to describe critical theory that focuses on the writing of women. *The New Feminist Criti-*

A Wife for My Son

By Ali Ghallem

Translated from the French by G. Kazolias

Banner Press, P.O. Box 6469
Chicago, IL \$5.95

Boy gets girl, boy meets girl, boy rapes girl. A simple plot, and not disordered at all—if this is a modern novel from Maghreb. Fatiha and Hocine come from nice families who only want the best for them. And so things are arranged: What ought to be the beginning of happily-ever-after becomes a journey into the special hell reserved for the young, in societies bearing the burdens of late capitalism without its rewards. *A Wife for My Son*, written by an Algerian filmmaker, like his film of the same title, has won awards and a wide and enthusiastic international public. Lucidly written, it's not great literature, but it is a solid good read, and an introduction to a vivid and shocking world usually closed to Westerners. Ghallem has an eye for the revealing moment and his prose flows unpretentiously.

The focus of the tale is Fatiha, but more generally the novel is an exposé of the plight of women in Arab society today. Fatiha is an ordinary girl with a smattering of education and dreams of becoming a clothing designer. Married at 16 to an inarticulate husband who goes out drinking with friends on his wedding night, she soon realizes that he is doomed to return alone to his coffin-flat in Paris if he is ever to find work. And she is now trapped for the rest of her life inside another coffin, the home of her in-laws, only to leave shrouded in a veil. Life promises days of sorting beans, months of pregnancy, years of stupefying animal boredom. Her faintest efforts at relief—even to write a letter to a girlfriend—are thwarted by people convinced that any sign of personality is a threat to the family. In fact, the family is threatened by much larger forces. The young men can never become patriarchs; they can't even find work. The young women cannot simply imitate their mothers; not only do schoolbooks and radio shows promise them other options, but economic insecurity denies them a future as traditional wives. Still, the pressure of a cruel modernity—a pictures-of-refrigerators kind of modernity—pushes everyone, young and old, into a futile search for stability in tradition. Everyone, that is, except the young bride.

Even though you could get claustrophobic along with Fatiha—the nicest thing that happens to her in the book is a hospital stay, when she can talk freely with other women—this is a novel without villains. It is a mark of the novel's success that when Hocine's brother rapes a family guest it's shocking; and yet you understand why she cuts short her

cism ignores feminist theory that focuses on male texts, whether they be literary or critical.

One important omission, to my mind, is Myra Jehlen's "Archimedes and the Paradox of Feminist Criticism," one of the most influential and controversial feminist articles to appear, which argues for a "radical comparativism" between male and female texts, if only to thereby define more precisely the

supposed difference between male and female writing. Also missing are any of the theoretical writings of Gayatri Spivak, who adroitly integrates Marxism and deconstruction. Given the largely socialist affinities, if not overt politics, of many feminist writers, and the current excitement over (and influence on feminists of) the political possibilities of deconstructive literary theories, such an omission

seems odd. Of course, all anthologies are plagued by such exclusions, and Showalter at least is aware of the problem.

Showalter courageously and responsibly chose to include Barbara Smith's "Toward a Black Feminist Criticism" and Bonnie Zimmerman's "What Has Never Been: An Overview of Lesbian-Feminist Criticism," both of which charge the white, academic feminist com-

munity (including Showalter) with implicit, if unconscious, racism and heterosexism. However, the total of three "marginal" articles on women of color and lesbianism constitute a rather token commitment on the editor's part to fully integrate these perspectives in her anthology. Also problematic is that, although the selections acknowledge the existence of theoretical writings by women of color

and lesbians, they ignore the substance of this theory.

Despite these problems, however, *The New Feminist Criticism* succeeds where many anthologies fail: it offers some of the most exciting thinking about one of the most important issues of our time. ■

Valerie Traub is a graduate student in feminist literary studies at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

visit without a word about it, and why it never occurs to him to feel guilty. This is a view from the genitals of social crisis. In one family's turmoil over sex roles is the incarnation of gross and violent processes outside the home. In Algeria, just like here, the "family's ethic" is an unhealthy response to a much bigger problem.

—P.A.

**The American Connection:
Vol. I: State Terror and Popular
Resistance in El Salvador
Vol. II: State Terror and Popular
Resistance in Guatemala**

By Michael McClintock

Zed Books Ltd, 388 & 319 pp.

Apologists for U.S. military aid to Central America have long protested that political murder, like the ravines and lakes that receive the dead, is simply part of the local landscape. That may be so, but does not exonerate the U.S. which has taught the strongmen some sophisticated lessons in repression, terror and assassination. While the U.S. continues in the name of democracy to support both counterinsurgency in El Salvador and insurgency in Nicaragua, the battle of words over U.S. policy rages hotter than ever. The Reagan administration has brandished an astonishing array of euphemisms, half-truths and lies to promote its simplistic anti-Communist position.

Michael McClintock writes that since spring 1979, when he began researching these volumes, more than 100,000 Salvadorans and Guatemalans have been killed by government forces that were set in place under the tutelage of the U.S. Starting with the Kennedy administration and its Alliance for Progress, the U.S. used a two-pronged approach to maintain "friendly" Central American regimes: counterinsurgency and formulas for reform. The attempted reforms have often degenerated into public relations ploys, McClintock says, while the dirty warfare has been stepped up. A senior researcher for Amnesty International, McClintock has culled recently declassified U.S. government documents to trace U.S. involvement in El Salvador and Guatemala. His research, backed up by impressive notes and bibliography, enables him to reconstruct the respective histories of the two countries from the standpoint of their internal security apparatuses, including police, military and paramilitary "death squad" networks. He demonstrates at length how modern intelligence and security systems financed and masterminded by the U.S. have widened state terror and provoked ever fiercer popular resistance. What the books lack is a clear picture of the insurgents themselves: their organization, tactics and even their human rights record. McClintock does a far better job of revealing the roots of their popu-

lar support. Also in doubt is the extent to which U.S. agents and military advisers may have participated first-hand in the savage interrogation of political prisoners. However, McClintock's volumes are an indispensable guide to U.S. policy, both in Central America and elsewhere in the Third World. They demonstrate how the language of U.S. policy translates into action.

—R.S.

**My Merry Mornings. Stories
from Prague.**

By Ivan Klíma

Translated by George Theiner
Readers International, distributed
by Persea Books, 154 pp., \$14.95

Ivan Klíma, who returned to Prague in 1970, long after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, is not your average dissident. Absent from the seven stories in this slim collection is the bitter taste we've

come to expect from *samizdat* brew. This author has let adversity strengthen his appreciation for decency and humor. "I'd like to finish by asking you not to write the people of this country off just because there is no way we can help you publicly," a train driver tells the narrator, who is very near to Klíma himself. The isolation of outcasts is often due to factors other than hostility: the inhabitants of one town in Czechoslovakia hadn't heard of Charter 77 for the defense of human rights because they fall asleep whenever the news comes on TV. Perhaps what's most unusual about Klíma is that he doesn't indulge in the moral superiority of the martyr. He has resisted the great demand for saints. By reminding us of his ordinariness, Klíma suggests that ethics should be the framework of any and every life. To speak up for those less articulate than he, to aid blacklisted and underemployed friends—like "Private Doctor of Philosophy Hovorka" and the foreman of a construction crew, Dr. Králík—he has chosen a life with few material rewards. In exchange, he enjoys less tangible satisfactions. "We all live only one of our many possible lives," Klíma once wrote in an article that was recently republished in *They Shoot Writers, Don't They* (Faber and Faber), an anthology of essays edited by Klíma's translator, George Theiner. Deprived of the temptations of fame and wealth, he has discovered a voice that is modest, independent and gentle. Though well received in Britain, *My Merry Mornings* has gotten almost no attention in this country. Is this because Klíma doesn't conform to Americans' expectations of how a dissident should sound?

—K.R.

Mr. Block

By Ernest Riebe

Charles H. Kerr Publishing Co.,
Box 914, Chicago, IL 60690
\$3.95

Mr. Block, a cartoon character drawn by Industrial Workers' of the World (IWW) Ernest Riebe and destined to become an all-time Wobbly favorite, was introduced to readers of the *Industrial Worker*, an IWW newspaper in the Northwest, on Nov. 2, 1912. In this premiere appearance Mr. Block established himself as a worker with zero class consciousness. He burns an IWW newspaper and then, after reading the "respectable" *Saturday Evening Post*, invests 10 years of savings in a banking firm that promptly goes bust with the banker sailing off to Monte Carlo in an air balloon. Joe Hill would soon compose a song describing him as a fellow with a head of lumber, solid as a rock; and to rank-and-file Wobblies he was a worker only from the neck down. Now, a facsimile edition of the first Mr. Block comic book (24 panels from 1912-13) with the original preface

by *Industrial Worker* editor Walker C. Smith and the Joe Hill song, has been issued by Kerr Publishing Company. An engaging introduction by Franklin Rosemont links the cartoons to the humor of the day and the history of the American comic book. The strips bear out his contention that Mr. Block humorously exposes the various shibboleths of dominant culture for a mass audience. No genial Archie Bunker whose humanity ultimately wins a measure of affection, Mr. Block is such a sucker that we recoil from any identification with him. He also mocks the timidity in all of us when after some bad rounds with the capitalists he considers that "maybe" he will join the IWW "when it gets stronger." Today's reader will be startled by contemporary similarities with Block's losing bouts with banks, courts, police, employers, charities and conservative unions. Another familiar reality is that the far more militant Mrs. Block often takes issue with her husband's values. This "first radical comic book" is an antiquarian delight that retains its original ideological bite.

—D.G.

**Community Is Possible:
Repairing America's Roots**

By Harry Boyte

Harper & Row, 243 pp., \$6.95

Harry Boyte's *Community Is Possible: Repairing America's Roots* (a sequel to his *The Backyard Revolution: Understanding the New Citizen Movement*) is an important work for the left because he describes and analyzes a new "democratic populism" in the U.S. Drawing on such concepts as "community renewal" and "the commonwealth," the author shows that successful, long-term "community revitalization" efforts require the integration of deeply held values and a sense of tradition. He challenges the left to find a way to tap into the traditional ways in which Americans have organized themselves in order to bring about social change. From Boyte's perspective, the U.S. today is confronted with a "crisis of values" and the disintegration of historical communal bonds. The author's analysis is rooted in what he calls America's finest traditions: democracy, populism, justice, equality and communal values. He draws on examples of Native American tribes, Christian communities, disabled people's movements, tenants groups and community organizations in discussing community revitalization. Boyte paints a picture of democratic populist communities springing up all over the country in spite of a national conservative trend. These new communities provide the U.S. with an alternative path of development.

—S.S. & N.A.

Contributors: Pat Aufderheide, Dan Georgakas, Karen Rosenberg, Steven Soifer and Naomi Almeleh, Rachel Sternberg

NOTEBOOKS

*The first Mr. Block
cartoon in the Nov.
7, 1912, Industrial
Worker*



Mr. Block

ART «» ENTERTAINMENT



Photographer unknown

THEATER

Brecht, new vaudevillians take on La Jolla audiences

By Robert Hurwitt

IF NOT THE LAST, LA JOLLA, Calif., is certainly not the first place one would go to seek politically challenging theater. The affluent suburb north of San Diego—a town that boasts a large military presence—has long been regarded as a bastion of comfortable conservatism. The La Jolla Playhouse, its one major theatrical enterprise, achieved something of a national reputation in the '50s more on the basis of its casting than the plays it presented. Founded by Gregory Peck, Mel Ferrer and Dorothy McGuire in 1947 as a summer theater where Hollywood actors could reap the benefits of working with live audiences, the Playhouse prospered well into the '60s with casts headed by the likes of Joseph Cotten, Tallulah Bankhead, James Mason, Ethel Waters, Olivia de Havilland, Eve Arden, Lee Marvin, Patricia Neal and Groucho Marx, among many others.

But it was never what one would call an adventuresome company. Safe, commercially viable comedies, mysteries and musicals were its main bill of fare. Despite the popularity of its productions, the Playhouse had its financial difficulties, chiefly due to its need for a larger and more up-to-date theater. In 1965 it closed its doors, temporarily, while consolidating its resources and planning a new facility.

That facility proved a long time coming, and when it finally opened its doors in 1983, the La Jolla Playhouse was a very different operation. The inaugural pro-

duction resounded like the opening shot in a war against artistic apathy. The show was *The Visions of Simone Machard*, Bertolt Brecht's stinging attack on war profiteers (and all others who put profits ahead of social justice) told as the World War II version of the legend of Joan of Arc.

Peter Sellars, now artistic director of the American National Theater in Washington, D.C., staged the play as a frontal assault on the audience, utilizing every inch of the state-of-the-art new theater, even to having one of the visions played out on the lighting grid far above the spectators' heads. The effect was to make the audience sit up and take notice. Brecht's message came through loud and clear, as did that of the Playhouse's new artistic director, Des McAnuff.

Raised in Toronto, the 32-year-old McAnuff is part of a new wave of artistic directors heading up major regional repertory theaters around the country and shaking up audiences who had grown accustomed to comfortable, escapist fare. "We need to be discussing issues onstage," McAnuff said in a recent interview in *American Theatre*, the monthly magazine of the national Theatre Communications Group. "We need to be asking questions, encouraging people to think.... There needs to be content in what we do. The times in which we live demand it."

McAnuff rounded out his first summer season at the Playhouse with Barrie Keefe's British social satire, *A Mad World My Masters*, and a strikingly updated version of *Romeo and Juliet* featuring John

Vickery and Amanda Plummer. The highlight of his second season, *Big River*, a musical version of *Huckleberry Finn* with songs by Roger Miller, went on to virtually sweep the Tony Awards for musicals this year. This summer, his third with the Playhouse, McAnuff had Brecht back on the boards, treating audiences to the words of the most socially-engaged of modern playwrights enlivened by a staging that drew heavily on "new vaudeville" per-

"We need to discuss issues onstage," says artistic director Des McAnuff.

"We need to ask questions and encourage people to think. The times demand it."

formance techniques.

Brecht would probably have loved the concept but would have had some complaints about the final production—perhaps more about his own text than about director Robert Woodruff's staging. *A Man's a Man* is one of Brecht's early works, heavily influenced by the vaudeville style of the great German cabaret clown Karl Valentin. In broadly comic, slapstick scenes, the play presents the military transformation of a peaceable man into a killing machine. The Irish dockworker, Galy Gay, resident of the mythical Indian town of Kilkoa, on his way to buy a fish for dinner, is waylaid by a trio of British soldiers who have lost their fourth man while looting a local pagoda. Should they show up at rolcall one man short, their crime will be detected. So they set out to strip Galy Gay of his civilian personality and succeed so well that he turns into the most ruthless of them all, single-handedly conducting the artillery barrage that destroys a fortress in the path of the army's assault on Tibet—and incidentally wiping out seven thousand refugees from his wife's homeland.

Although the play's satire is savage, it hasn't the impact of Brecht's greater works. Brecht apparently was never quite satisfied with it; he revised the play more often than almost any of his others—and Brecht was a notorious reviser. The version presented by the Playhouse was his last revision, completed in his 50s but never staged by him (Brecht died in 1956). Had he done so, he would doubtless have made even more changes.

Even so, the production staged by Robert Woodruff was a striking and thought-provoking piece of theater. Woodruff is no stranger to the demands of vaudeville-style performance. The *Comedy of Errors* he directed for Chicago's Goodman Theater (restaged at last year's Olympic Arts Festival in Los Angeles) was a riot of circus-arts comedy employing the talents of a great number of new vaudevill-

Gloria Mann (left), Bill Irwin, Geoff Hoyle and Doug Roberts in Bertolt Brecht's A Man's a Man.

lians, including the Flying Karamazov Brothers and Vaudeville Nouveau. For *A Man's a Man* he called upon no less a master comic than Bill Irwin (see *In These Times*, June 12) and provided him with a supporting cast that included his fellow master clown from their formative years with San Francisco's Pickle Family Circus, Geoff Hoyle.

The production was ingenious and masterful, opening with Laurie Anderson-style music (by Douglas Wieselmann) and visual effects played out on a corrugated plastic jungle backdrop—then moving into the placid homelife of Galy Gay and his wife before shattering the peace with the entrance of the British army from all sides of the stage at once, with soldiers even descending, some in a frenzy of contortions, on long vine-like ropes from the flyspace above the stage. Manic effect after effect followed with actors periodically stepping forward to tell us what they were up to or what Brecht was up to and to explain the developing moral of the piece. Irwin, Hoyle, John Vickery and Ebbe Roe Smith formed a superb foursome as the British machine-gun unit, working with perfect comic timing. Irwin's Keatonesque deadpan created a calm eye in the slapstick hurricane around him.

If the parts worked better than the whole, I think it's because Woodruff remained too faithful to Brecht's text—more so than I believe Brecht would have. But the production left no doubt that Des McAnuff and the La Jolla Playhouse are firmly committed to challenging their audiences to think, to consider and to ask questions. And in that lies the hope for theater in America.

Robert Hurwitt is associate editor of the East Bay Express (Berkeley) and editor of West Coast Plays, a series of drama anthologies.

Stonewall

Continued from page 16

Politically, Vidal's road is by far the more profitable, given that the causes of homosexuality remain fundamentally unknown. It is easier to argue for the elimination of restrictions against acts than it is to seek acceptance of something as vague as a "sensitivity." The goal of getting the bully to stop beating up the sissy is workable. The goal of getting the bully to approve of the sissy requires a different kind of revolution, a revolution yet to take place in, for example, the USSR. Or the People's Republic of China. Or the U.S. of A.

The gays surveyed in *Before Stonewall* range from a Native American woman biker to a white queen who thinks of himself as a "Southern belle." What emerges from this polyglot group is that homosexuality is no predictor of political persuasion or sophistication. But if homosexual activity *per se* portends nothing, the anguish inherent in living out of the closet, pre-Stonewall, is seen by the film as frequently leading to politicization.

In an episode with the most parallels outside the gay world, a woman is hounded out of the military during the McCarthy era. Director Schiller: "There was a big purge of gay people, and she was found guilty by association. She was called into a commanding office and asked to reveal the identity of other lesbians in the military. They guaranteed that if she finked, she

would be given an honorable discharge. They applied all sorts of intimidation tactics—waking her up at night, having her tailed—and after a couple of months, she finally broke down and confessed some names, including the name of her lover. She was given an "undesirable" discharge, reserved at the time only for sexual perversion. It's like being marked for life. They took her lover off the base, told her family and the woman never heard from her again. Her relationship was destroyed and her life was devastated. "There are easier ways to learn not to believe the promises made by certain people representing certain aspects of the American system; there are few that are more difficult.

And now AIDS. Once again the gay world is (understandably) clamoring for relief from the very government responsible for so many of its miseries, and once again, gays—even politically sensitive gays—are in danger of becoming single-issue constituents. Larry Kramer, author of an AIDS play, believes that AIDS is killing not only gay men, but the gay movement (typical male chauvinism, the notion that the men make the movement) and is fearful gay males will return to the cringing sissidom rampant before Stonewall.

If only by implication, *Before Stonewall* indicates otherwise. In the years before Stonewall, the major item on the gay agenda was to be allowed to live openly as a gay human being. To some degree—to a degree many gay people would not have thought possible in the '50s—that goal was achieved. After Stonewall, the major item

was to live well as a gay person and, to an astonishing degree—to a degree that was conspicuous in its consumption of everything from Key West resorts to elaborate sex toys—that goal was achieved.

With the arrival of AIDS, the major item is to live at all. However, that need not and should not mean that the gay community will wait until after AIDS, if that day should ever come, to continue working toward the other major item on the gay agenda: the goal of one day getting rid of the need for a gay agenda. After Stonewall and well

IN THESE TIMES SEPT. 11-17, 1985 15 into the AIDS era there are two battles to be fought. The lesson of *Before Stonewall* is that they can be, that it is possible to carry on under the most evil of odds. ■

Jay Scott is the film critic of the *Toronto Globe & Mail* and the author of *Midnight Matinees*, a book of essays and reviews recently published by Oxford University Press.

For information on non-theatrical distribution of *Before Stonewall*, contact Cinema Guild, 1697 Broadway, #802, New York, NY 10019.

CALENDAR

Use the calendar to announce conferences, lectures, films, events, etc. The cost is **\$20.00 for one insertion, \$30.00 for two insertions** and **\$15.00 for each additional insert**, for copy of 50 words or less (additional words are 50¢ each). Payment must accompany your announcement, and should be sent to the attention of **ITT Calendar**.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

September 12

"Labor in El Salvador"—a meeting with Francisco Acosta, U.S. Representative of the Salvadoran trade union federation FENASTRAS, Thursday, September 12, at 7:30 p.m. at 240 Golden Gate in San Francisco. For information phone CISPES, (415) 861-0425.

LOS ANGELES, CA

September 14

"Los Angeles Celebrates Voices of Resis-

tance"—The renowned Chilean ensemble, Inti-Illimani and Sabia in concert Saturday, September 14, 1985, 8:00 p.m. Robert Frost Auditorium, 4401 Elenda, Culver City, CA. Tickets \$10, at Cafe Cultural, Chatterton's Books, Rhino Records, Sisterhood Bookstore, Chelsea Books, Midnight Special Books, Venice-Ocean Park Food Coop. For info: (213) 470-0898 or (818) 505-9817.

INDIANA, PA

October 23-25

U.S. Working Class History and Contemporary Labor Movement Symposium. Keynotes: Melvin Dubofsky and David Gordon. Speakers include Sean Wilentz, Celia Eckhardt, Leon Fink, Mari Jo Buhle, Philip Nyden, Nelson Lichtenstein, Alice Kessler-Harris, Everett Kasselow, Peter Kelly and Charles Bryan. Contact: Irwin Marcus, History Department, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA 15705, (415) 357-2227.

CLASSIFIED

HELP WANTED

BOOKKEEPER/FINANCIAL MANAGER for national political organization. \$15-18,000 plus benefits. Contact Democratic Socialists of America, 853 Broadway, Room 801, NY, NY 10003, Attention: Guy Molyneux, (212) 260-3270. EOE.

SKY THE LIMIT IN A CITY WITH A POPULIST MAYOR? Community organizers to work on exciting new anti- arson and housing organizing project in Boston with Massachusetts Fair Share. Fair Share is a membership-based, leadership controlled organization. Salary \$14,000-\$17,000 plus benefits. Send resume by Sept. 20 to: Daniel Le Blanc, Mass. Fair Share, 20 East St., Boston, MA 02111. (617) 654-9000. EOE. Persons of color encouraged to apply.

IN THESE TIMES is seeking an ASSISTANT PUBLISHER to organize fundraising and promotional activities at the paper. Must have previous fundraising and public relations experience. Ability to write grants and solicit funds from individuals and organizations. Experience with board of directors and

volunteers desirable. Salary range \$18,000-22,000. Send resume to: Alfred Dale, ITT, 1300 W. Belmont, Chicago, IL 60657

DIRECTOR, ESSEX COUNTY Tenant Resource Center-New Jersey. Organize tenants to strengthen rent control and build tenant organization. Supervise staff of 7. Develop innovative housing programs, work with 50,000-member New Jersey tenants organization. Qualifications: Several years community organizing experience. Experience in directing issue campaigns and staff supervision. Salary \$24,000-27,600. Where: Montclair, NJ, suburb of New York City. Apply to: Essex County Tenant Resource Center, 358 Bloomfield Ave., Montclair, NJ 07042. EOE.

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Before and after Stonewall

Activist Barbara Gittings at the first homosexual rights demonstration, on July 4, 1965



By Jay Scott

WITH THE ADVENT OF AIDS, *Before Stonewall*, an extraordinary documentary that will air on public TV after opening theatrically in New York, assumes even more importance than it once had—and it had plenty. Winner at Los Angeles' Filmex film festival, *Before Stonewall* is the first thorough consideration in movies of what life was like in the U.S. for gay men and women in the years before the "sin that dared not speak its name" finally found its voice, a voice that is once again in danger of being silenced, and not necessarily by disease.

Historians of the struggle for gay liberation date the public inception of the movement from the full moon night of June 27, 1969, when New York cops attempted a routine raid on a Greenwich Village gay bar, The Stonewall. The men inside at first refused to come out, and when they did they came out swinging. The trouncing of the bullies in blue ended—and ended forever, it is fervently hoped—the cringing and complicity that had characterized the collective reaction of American gays to their oppression.

Directed by a 30-year-old New Yorker, Greta Schiller, and narrated by Rubyfruit Jungle author Rita Mae Brown, *Before*

Stonewall begins in an age when, as Mattachine Society founder Harry Hay puts it in the movie, "You knew each other by a red necktie." (Young gays who know each other by ogling the same tumescent beefcake centerfold in *Blueboy* at the local 7-Eleven will think this is science fiction.)

Schiller is careful in the opening of the film—essentially a collage of interviews, archival clips and hilariously appropriate scenes from films starring the likes of Tom Mix and the current Leader of the American people—to emphasize the joy and humor that were found even in the dark recesses of a closet that spread from coast to coast. Mabel Hampton, an aged black domestic, reminisces about a gay bar in Harlem called The Garden of Joy and boasts with a verve that would do Bessie Smith proud, "Oh, girl, you had some time there!" Another interviewee, a lesbian soldier, remembers that "the induction station became known as the seduction station," and that "the battalion was

probably 99 percent lesbian. We were all over the place."

Meanwhile, a black professor, thinking back on the group of gay women she was part of years ago, remembers, "We knew we were outsiders." To ask a black lesbian this question is probably silly, but how did you know? "We hated typing."

Peace in punchlines

Seldom has a liberation movement been so full of laughter, and if there is anything that distinguishes political gays from their straight counterparts it may be their penchant for finding ephemeral peace in punchlines. From the outset, the gay and feminist movements have been plagued by internal ideological debates regarding the extent of their "otherness": in the case of the gay movement, the debate over the existence of a so-called "gay sensibility" has proved particularly troublesome.

Dotson Rader declares in his new memoir of Tennessee Williams that a gay sensibility does exist, but Gore Vidal has tirelessly attempted to convince the American elect, if not the electorate, that there is no such thing as a homosexual or heterosexual person, that there are merely homosexual or heterosexual acts.

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